THE HARVEST

L. H. BAILEY

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THE HARVEST

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WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?
THE SEVEN STARS
THE HARVEST
THE GARDEN LOVER

THE HARVEST

OF THE YEAR TO THE TILLER OF THE SOIL

BY

L. H. BAILEY

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PART I

THE SITUATION

THE HARVEST

I

The New Year

THE spring has come again. The winter has been long and the roads stopped with snow; but today the mercury is at 70 and there are signs of warm thunder; soon the spouts will be filled with April rain. By twos and threes and more the juncoes are in the open fields, and soon will be leaving for their breeding-places. Up from the South the bluebirds have come, acting yet like strangers, flitting singly across the highways. The pussy willows begin to show, and children are gathering them. The winter wheat makes patches of emerald in the distance. Only in the shady places and on the wooded hills does the snow still linger, in long ribbons behind the fences, and in ditches by the roadside where the hastening water runs underneath; there are great patches of it in the farther forests. We can see where the rabbits have gnawed the bushes above the snow line. Soon we shall be looking for arbutus and the first hepaticas; and even now the alders in the swamps are showing their tassels. Before

long, cows will be set afield, and horses will be rolling on the ground and snorting their freedom.

The smell of April is here. It is faint and indefinable, yet it is real. It is an effluvium of unbonded brooks, of pastures and bushy fields, drying roads, gathered up by warm winds and whiffed over the earth. Soon the smell of the soil will be freed, that elemental stimulating odor that is unlike every other and that exhilarates today as when the first man turned the soil. It is a creative perfume that suggests teams afield, growing crops, the very essence of the romantic earth. If there were no other criterion by which to distinguish the real farmer, born to the land, I should know him by his response to the smell of the furrow; this redolence will be his incense, it will be an aroma stronger than the balm of pine woods or the wild tang of the sea, it will bring him from the factory and the city and send him into the field with his plow or with any implement that will open the ground and set its fragrance free. It will unlock old memories, grown dim with the rust of years; it will fill him with dreams of flocks on soft pastures and of corn or cotton in long straight rows; it will inspire him with health; it will vision him of summer and harvest, and set him into the determination of spirit that will carry his year to its finish.

Today a few teams are at the plow in warm

early fields. Much land was plowed in the autumn and it lies rough and ready for the harrow; soon the harrow will be on it; birds will be watching for provender, and the whole field will be sweet with the blessing of spring. There is no prophecy to compare with a newly plowed field at the end of winter. With all our chemical and physical and biological analysis, this familiar soil is still a mystery, stolid and immotile and yet a new sensitive problem with every new year and a stronger challenge as a man grows calmer and more wise.

January first we set apart in the calendar as the beginning of the year; but to the farmer the year begins with the first furrow, and this epoch coincides more or less roughly, from south to north in this hemisphere, with the spring solstice, when the sun is on the equator. Then the doors begin to be opened and the new year comes in. The farm may be old and the man may be old, but the new year is as instant and fresh as ever. From this threshold, looking outward with a new heart, let us approach the problem of the farm in a troublous time.

The spring is a season of changes other than in the climate. Naturally, new resolutions are made, or old ones are vivified, when vegetation starts again and the birds begin to build, and the animals smell the open fields. The lands are seen with new eyes after the covered sleep

of winter. Business affairs are at an epoch in anticipation of a new year and a new deal. On March first or April first interest is due and taxes are to be paid. In some parts of the country, tenants and hired hands move on April first; auctions are held; there is a general change and shift of goods and plans; the main affairs are settled for the year. When the farmer has passed this epoch he takes a new hold and is ready in earnest for his farming; and he goes at it with zest.

Here I come, then, to the purpose of this little book that I am setting out to write and to assemble in the aspiration of the early spring, but which I shall not complete until the last crop is garnered. I shall make known some of my estimates of the current situations but only as a background against which I may project concerns of greater moment. We shall come to these concerns time and again from different angles and varied points of view, for I mean to drive the message home. I trust I may be able to express some of the realities in the year's harvest. It is a time to pause and to reflect, and to establish new standards for value.

If, in the course of our excursion, we take a backward look now and then, it is not that the past is better than the present but because conditions were simpler then and we may be able thereby to discern some of the fundamental situations more clearly; and even if the past

were surely better, we nevertheless live in the present and must make the most of it. Two kinds of problems are in the background,—those inherent in the fact of farming, those that arise from the commercial or financial situation of the time; we are likely to stress only the latter, because they are of recent origin. Once farming was itself a function, setting its own program, largely supplying its own needs; now it meets the trade conditions of the world and is controlled by prices; but I hope it is still a mode of life. The new situation calls for new and better knowledge. The need of further and still further research in every direction is urgent, in the human and biological, physical, chemical and related lines and in the great science of economics; all these I leave for the moment to those who are competent in them, and I know their findings will be good; I am now addressing myself to my fellow man rather than to his emergencies.

The successful farm life is a complex of balances. There must be the proper ratio or equivalence between the money income, the intellectual satisfactions, and the expression of the soul; therefore the contents of this little book are essays in proportions.

II

The Farmer and the Lander

A farmer writes me that in his region "farmers, as a rule, never think of preserving the soil or taking care of it. They seem to think that the soil does not need any attention, other than sowing and then harvesting the crop from it."

Those men are not farmers, but landers. Real farming is a continuing occupation, year after year and perhaps generation after generation; the capital stock, which is the soil, increases in value through the effort of the farmer. There is an attachment between the man and the land and this is worth more for the good both of farming and society than any extent of commercial theory or political action. This safeguard lies in the realm of the emotions, as deeply set as the convictions of religion.

And here we come against a vast confusion in the public mind. In politics and business and even in agriculture we speak of "the farmer" as if he represents a homogeneous group, but the landers constitute a different class from the farmers although we lump them all together. The needs and the remedies that

apply to the one may not condition the other. The farmer has other rewards than the money receipts; he has a psychic income, and he would not forego it. Moreover, he is the one who keeps the earth fit, and thereby he makes a major social contribution.

I am not minded to condemn the man who is unable, but willing, to keep his soil intact, for I have long ago pointed out that society may prevent him from doing so by withholding proper remuneration for his products. One of the sad results of great depressions in agriculture is the giving up of intensive careful methods and a general let-down in conservation of fertility because the man must reduce his activities to the scant minimum; this is the terrible toll that society pays for its neglect of the proper safeguarding of the farming occupations.

But note that my correspondent speaks of the intention of the man, of those who "never think" of preserving the soil. The man who has no unerring desire to improve his soil year by year and yet continues to crop it, who is interested in acres rather than in essentials, is the lander. In the interest of a resourceful occupation of the earth by every one of us, it is a fair question how much pains should be taken to retain this man on the farm. One of the real problems in the present agricultural situation is the fact that we are trying to aid and keep persons on the land who by moral and

social right do not belong there. Much of our perplexity will pass when we grasp these distinctions.

It is not strange that there are persons making a living from the land who are not farmers. Consider that in former time it was the natural state for most men to live on the land. It is recorded that more than ninety per cent of the people in the United States were rural in the first census, 1790. These occupants represented all kinds of people. For one hundred years we have been in the process of removing people from the land: other means of livelihood have been available; industrial pursuits have needed the recruits; the producing-power of the farmer has greatly increased. This process of removal has proceeded without conscious direction and there has been no adequate policy for utilization of lands left more or less vacant. The results have been haphazard and unequal. We have not yet sufficiently sifted and sorted the farming populations. We are still in the shift. Moreover, many persons have taken to the land who by training and temperament are out of place.

Plowing the land and raising a crop is not farming. The feeding of a lot of live-stock is not husbandry. Farming is a system, one that the farmer works out for himself to suit his land, his climate and location, and his tastes; it connects all the years into a program.

Yet we must not lose sight of the fact, to which I have just now called attention, that society, represented in political and commercial systems, would still carry a real responsibility for the maintenance of the producing-power of the land even if every lander were removed. Society has a larger stake in the welfare of the farmer than in that of any other man; this will be realized when population increases and new lands really become scarce. The farmer transmutes the raw elements of the earth into materials of food and clothing. If the receipts from these materials are too small, he is obliged to live on the capital of nature if he remains on the land—to mine his potash and phosphorus and to sell it or waste it. This has been the case in the long history of civilization.

The farmer must be able to maintain a standard of living equal to that of other men; anything less than this means an ignorant yeomanry, impoverished soil, and headlong haste on the road to ruin.

III

Farmers and Farmers

We may profitably pursue the subject of the last discussion somewhat further. I am convinced that we are sadly confusing the subject of agricultural relief by not recognizing the many diverse occupations that go under the general name "farming." Mostly when we speak of "the farmer" in our present demands for legislation, we have in mind the grain-farmer or the live-stock man or the cotton-grower; but to many other farmers in many parts of the country these demands mean nothing. I remember that some few years ago there was a widespread fear of a farmer's trust; I then tried to point out the improbability of such a combination by calling attention to the fact that farmers do not have common interests, and my statement of that day may well be applicable here. It is from the President's address to the American Association for Agricultural Legislation, 1920, from which I may draw again as my subject unfolds.

"I have little fear of political class solidarity of farmers for the reason that what we call 'farming' is not one thing. It is of many occupations. The raisers of roses and beef cattle

have little in common in respect of occupational legislation. The cotton-grower and the wool-grower have few points of fraternal contact. Where is the class-unionism between market-gardeners of the East and the wheat-raisers of the Northwest, between orange-growers and tobacco-planters, nurserymen and stock-breeders, dairymen and bee-keepers, sheep-rangers and cattle-rangers? Farming represents a series of occupations, agreeing in the contact with the earth but differing in methods, products, markets, mental aptitudes. Some of the ranges are competitors, even commercial antagonists. The very diversity and separateness of these multitudes of interests make for safety in public polity.

"We are to expect strong drives from certain occupations or classes or regions of farmers, but it is difficult to project a faction or party of all farmers, the country over. We are to dispose of our fears that there may be a 'farmers' trust.' The occupational drives may even be necessary and unavoidable, as society now functions, to gain opportunity and justice, as it has been necessary in order to obtain justice for the workingman. We commend united action; members of coöperative and other associations are bound by rules to which they subscribe; but the principle at stake in the general organizations of farmers is this,—to reserve to every person his freedom of action, the man

to be his own master, attainment above the basic wage or income to be on merit, and the organization not to vote the membership as a body; and the public-service relationships are to be stimulated.

"It is true, of course, that farmers of similar occupation may restrict or expand their production simultaneously over a large area as the movement of prices and supply of labor may dictate, but this is a very different action from an organized drive, strike or lockout of all men who till the soil. There will come to be a common sentiment among farmers on leading questions in politics and trade; this sentiment should be carefully considered by legislators and publicists."

If farming is not one business or enterprise, neither is it homogeneous over any such extent of territory as the United States or Canada. Therefore, one remedy to be applied everywhere by the federal government is at least of doubtful value. Education and guidance are needed everywhere, but the problems are regional. This fact was recognized by the Roosevelt Commission on Country Life, and its hearings were held in the regions. The Commission asked nothing of Congress in the way of direct legislation for farmers; its suggestions for federal action were in the direction of educational and service developments and inquiries to ascertain facts and conditions. "The Commission

will fail of its purpose," the brief report says, "if it confines itself merely to providing remedies or correctives for the present and apparent troubles of the farmer, however urgent and important these troubles may be. All these matters must be conceived of as incidents or parts in a constructive program. We must begin a campaign for rural progress."



Let me bring another phase of this subject to the reader's attention. Jerry was always complaining of bad weather, poor crops, his unequal chance, and other disablements; he had the short end of the evener. John, his neighbor, a good and seasoned farmer, was asked why Jerry was so unhappy, and this was the reply: "Jerry is not a farmer at heart."

Jerry should have been a business man or a salesman. Every hindrance was to him a business failure; to John it might be an occasion for sitting on the steps and watching the alfalfa grow.

It is repeatedly insisted that we should give more attention to the business side of agriculture. This is undisputed; but there are three other sides to a square occupation. Farming is not a business, in the usual sense; but business methods may be applied in it. Persons who are business men at heart are not in place on the

farm, although many of them may be living there. Our present style of teaching, by stressing all the business activities, is likely to make farming as hard and unfeeling as much of our general industry; such a result would be deplorable. Farming is not an institution of high-pressure production. It is said that we must learn to run the farms like factories; if this is possible and we accrue the results typical of factories then I shall consider agriculture a failure, whatever may be the outcome in cheapened food production. It is possible to make a better utilization of the farmer's time, but farming is not a part-time occupation even though certain crops can be made on that basis. The farmer himself grows his crops on part time; but cropping is not all there is to farming.

By some means we must try to save the amateur spirit in farming, that is, the love of it (as the word signifies) and to find therein a substantial reward. It is unfortunate that we have so long used this word "amateur" erroneously as to miss its real meaning; the most seasoned practical farmer may still be an amateur, for the word does not mean a tyro, beginner, novice, smatterer or mere sentimentalist.

In the farmer-at-heart is a quality different from the commercial instinct; perhaps this is one reason why his troubles multiply in a commercial epoch; but to eliminate his inherent quality would work his undoing. And I hope

that he will remain measurably indifferent to what Huxley calls "that social notoriety which passes by the name of success." In our ambitious schemes of conservation we should not overlook the saving of the nativities.

If we are to analyze our discussions and make them accurate, we must recognize the striking differences between farmers and farmers.

IV

The Promoter and the Farmer

It was a vast region, newly developed. The landscapes were plains rimmed by a low horizon and on the other side mountains that rise to the fertilizing clouds. The new ditches were marked for miles by the glow of wild sunflowers, and the rolling water was eager to unlock the fertility of lands that had never been leached of their plant-food by heavy rainfall nor over-stored with alkali. It was of course the biggest and best development "in the world."

Roads were extending themselves along the section lines and new little houses were growing like great weeds out of the naked plain. A village was assuming its rectangular form, an astounding hotel was at the center near the railway station, a great school-house in bright brick and paint was the only occupant of a town square. One-story shops in a double line and resplendent with advertising marked the single street, little houses straggled out in all directions to meet the environing desert. Bold activity was abroad in the glowing sun, broad-brimmed men on shuffling horses, the dash of automobiles in and out, trucks piled high with

implements and machinery, everywhere the enthusiasm of potash and phosphoric acid and nitrogen newly released from the soil,—using these terms broadly as tokens of fertility.

The boundless fields of glorious weeds testified to the richness of the soil wherever the water applied its magic touch. The water was the solvent of the age-long stores of food, the alchemist that transmuted the lifeless materials of the desert into the gold of weedy blossoms and the hastening lines of crops, the cool and laughing servitor that bubbled in feed-lot and shed and residence. The earth was young again, rescued from its dessicated death by this fresh clean diluent from the hills, unpolluted by factories or towns. The canals were full to the brim, ready always to burst through the gates at every opening and to bathe the thirsty land. This fullness itself was an emblem of hope, a steady surge that buoyed every spirit and made the people confident. The great main ditch was a ribbon of beauty in the receding landscape. Like the River of God of the Psalmist, it was "full of water." The Lord "visitest the earth and waterest it" and "greatly enrichest it"; he "waterest her furrows abundantly."

Life was in these canals, homes and towns seemed to have sprouted from seeds dropped years ago in the great wastes, visions of beautiful cities and limitless wealth were in every-

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one's eyes, newcomers were arriving over-night, the country was astir.

Regions of deficient rain awaken the master-spirit in men. More than elsewhere men then become unconstrained of weather and take matters into their own hands. They play with water somewhat as Jove played with lightning, bidding it come and do as they will. I like to walk with a man along his ditches in the irrigation country, to keep pace with his confident stride, to share his sense of mastery of the situation. Or if he does not irrigate, the qualified man adapts himself closely to his situation by the expedients of dry-farming, and if he has land and implements and capital enough there is something in his attitude like defiance of the elements. Perhaps it is not without significance that many of the old prophets were dry-land people.



The cropping in the "development" was excellent. The land had been well prepared by the mighty power and promptness of tractors, the best highbred seed had been chosen, the rows were as straight and regular as the lines in a carpet. Tillage was frequent and thorough. Last year the yields had been heavy on the few reclaimed areas and profits had been high; many new lands had now been broken, and the prospects were good for increased

yields. Hope was inherent in the situation; everyone was confident; great promotion plans were in the wind; everyone was talking in big figures. How tame seemed the old East whence these people had come, how slow and laborious and crude were the practices of the farming people there, how pitifully small were the harvests!

Experts of many kinds were in the region. There were overseers and sub-overseers, agents and other agents, financial men, road and irrigation engineers, entomologists and pathologists and agronomists, good men and earnest, that gave authority to the common conversation. All the difficulties (if accidentally there were any) were met promptly by trained specialists. Even a critical visitor agreed to the excellence of the program and the surety of results.

This body of trained and energetic people, backed by statements in carload lots and authenticated sales of land, exerted powerful influence with advertisers, legislators, and public opinion. The region was characterized by positive action and a highly energized community interest. It exerted much stronger influence than equal areas of far greater population.

Good land and freedom from old constraints make opinions that must be recognized. No man should be doomed to poor land. He leads a heartless existence and makes a mean con-

tribution to welfare. He should not be asked to make the sacrifice. Yet the poorer lands may some time be needed for agriculture. How then shall they be made available? These promoted developments of reclamation, by companies and governmental action, give the clew. At present our reclamation projects are chiefly concerned with the water supply, adding it by some sort of irrigation or removing it by drainage and dyking. Some day we shall reclaim certain areas directly by increasing the fertility (as far as nature will allow), under means that will be better understood then than now, society in its corporate capacity assuming that responsibility; areas may then be turned over to the individual, who will not be obliged to wear himself out in a hand-to-hand struggle with soil poverty, for safe opinion in democracy is not made by the losing contest. In the meantime, society should make it possible for men to be happily released from poor land. Some of the infertile land probably will never be farmed.

This lavish reclamation area, with its eighty thousand acres under ditch, is sparsely peopled. The farms are large, as becomes a new development. But the lands yet remaining under the deed of The Company are rapidly passing into private hands. Soon the enter-

tainment of "prospects" at the hotel will cease, the agents and salesmen of many kinds will depart, advertising competition between regions will be forgotten, the Office will be closed, the glow of new enthusiasm will decline, and the days of the promoter will be but a memory.

Travelers in distant parts will find these promoters on other projects, perhaps of reclamation or of the subdivision of land, and the glory of new conquests will be in their eyes. In the meantime, the old area will slow down. The natural subdivision of the farms will proceed. Population will increase. Faulty effort will have to be liquidated. Maintenance of fertility will become a pressing problem. Insects and diseases will invade. The deficiencies of climate will be manifest. The real problems of crop adaptation will come to the fore. New perplexities of irrigation and drainage will arise. Marketing problems will grow. Men will farm as individuals rather than as colonies. The drive of the corporation will be absent. The wonderful merits of the locality will fall from the billboards. Superlatives will pass.

It will remain a good region for good men. The early development will be a permanent asset so far as it was well executed and suited to the needs of an industrious farming community. Here and there a leader will emerge. He will be a good farmer, reserved in opinion, careful in speech, a leader because he is successful

in his affairs and has a kindly interest in his neighbors. He may not have been a marked man in the beginning. He has come up slowly, with no self-seeking. Often his silence on a public question will give the people pause and control the shaping of events.

Then the region will have taken its place in the scheme of things by the orderly processes of nature. Farms will pass from father to son. The promoters, who are now the pioneers in memory, will be honored. The community will contribute its harvests and its people to the public weal.

V

From Haying-Time to Radio

"Haying-time" in that day, fifty years and more ago in what was then called "The West," was a momentous event. Dates were reckoned from it. With house-cleaning in early spring and sheep-shearing later on and hog-killing in the autumn, it was one of the epochs of the year. It was interesting to see the great fleece come off the sheep and to watch the thin wraith-like animal that was hidden within it take strangely to the field and try to make itself at home again, but there was no event in the work of the year that seemed to change things so completely as haying.

In those early days I was not heavy enough to take much part in the mowing, and there were men in the neighborhood (we had no "communities" then) who were adepts with the scythe; but I carried water for the men and the inevitable lunches in the mid-forenoon and mid-afternoon and I was stout enough for the hand-rake and the cocking of the hay; and the change that came over the field was very real as I watched the grass fall evenly hour after hour under the advancing swish swish of the

scythes around and around the fields, and even the whetting of the long blades as the mower stood the snath on its end added punctuation to the transformation of the scene.

Since May the meadow had been forbidden territory. Every track through the timothy would show. We might skirt the edges of the field, along the rail fence; we might go up the little brook that started from the upturned stump in the farther corner of the field; but we could not be tempted into the grassy wilderness, not even by meadow-larks and bobolinks or the silent bells of wild lilies. Yet we knew there must be strange things in the depths of the grass. The mowing would disclose it all; and eagerly we would watch the mowers as they closed in on the last square of grass in the middle of the field, an operation known as "catching the rabbit." Like the odor of new-plowed land in spring, the fragrance of new-mown hay and wilting weeds was itself worth waiting for, even for a year and a day. When the grass was down we had a new landscape. Again we could go to the old stump, we could climb on the stone-pile now grown full of raspberries, and the brooklet once more dominated the scene. We would not go around by the road any more, but "cut across" the meadow.

It was like a holiday when the first mowing-machine came to that part of the country. It

came in from York State—and that of itself was an event—and my father was proud to have the neighbors look it over; and I doubt not that much engineering wisdom was dispensed by the visitors. We took much pride in the machine although it was a lumbering invention as compared with the patterns of the present day; but somehow the meadow began to lose its interest to me. We spent much time in fall and early spring cleaning the fields of stumps and stones and stubs, and in leveling the uneven surfaces; this of itself made the meadow much too respectable for wandering boys. Moreover, the machine could not talk but only whiz and burr and get tangled up in the long weeds and balk against a snag; and I never became civilized enough to enjoy turning grindstone to sharpen that endless cutter-bar, and the holder of it seemed to delight in putting his whole weight on it.

But my chief indictment against the mowing-machine was the fact that haying-time was no longer an epoch in the year. In the former time haying lasted three weeks; men came to the house to stay and they had stories to tell and experiences to relate, and they had new ways of doing things; now the wheel-rake had come with the mowing-machine and haying was only a mechanical labor and it was all over in less than a week. It was only the loading of the hay from the cock or windrow and the haul-

ing to the barn and the "mowing away" in the bay that made haying a human event and a separate season; and now even this event is taken away from us by the hay-loading machine and the power fork.

While we did not realize it then, the advent of the wonderful mowing-machine marked the beginnings of a significant change in our farming; and what was true for us was equally true for everyone else as machines and new ideas began their fateful entrance into the farming regions. These changes have been of two diverse kinds,—those affecting farming practice, and those altering the sentiment of the farming people.

Not in years but in effect those days are long ago. My father was reared in "the golden age of homespun," now made real for us by Horace Bushnell and Jared Van Wagenen, and I was brought up with his recollections; and I myself saw the last fading years of that epoch and even then every good farm was in some sense a factory, and the village blacksmith, harness-maker, wagon-maker, shoe-maker, cooper, tanner and miller were realities, and the saw-mills were doing their best to use up the timber.

It is not necessary to recount the innovations in farming practice now represented in such matters as wire fencing, sulky plows, tractors, bagged fertilizers, separators, milk-tests, milk-

ing-machines, feeding-rations, dehorned cattle, disease-prevention, spraying, incubators, seed-tests and seed-selection, hard roads, motor-cars, gas stations, central heating, market reports, hail insurance, daily newspaper, rural delivery of mail, reapers, radio, and a thousand other items so common that we do not know we have them.



These many innovations increase desires and deepen the daily life, let alone the great influence exerted by colleges of agriculture and experiment stations, the periodical and book press, and the free advice from everybody. We remember the pride of the farm boy in a snappy horse and buggy with which he could drive to town; then came the flair for the bicycle; then the automobile; and I do not know what it will be tomorrow. We are advised that the farm needs new machines; the residence must be newly furnished, and with electric lights and water-works, a piano, talking-machine and radio, the kitchen must be sanitary, the diet must be varied and caloried and vitamined. The clothing must be as fashionable as in the town; the health regulations for the children must be adopted; the physical scale of living must be as good as that for any other range of people. The youth must join the clubs and go to college.

All this costs money, and in more than geometrical ratio. Yet the productivity of the land is capable of only limited increase. The selling-price of the produce may rise, but the buying-prices of manufactured supplies rise in at least equal ratio. The producing-power of the land cannot extend in proportion to the coveted increase in scale of living; and the farmer finds himself dealing with nature and living against a natural market, whereas many of those with whom he deals or at least whom he emulates live in artificial conditions and increase their income by arbitrary mass-action through organization and "understandings" rather than by the merit or skill or necessity of the service or the labor; and the increased cost of products arising from such unnatural control are charged back on the farmer and other consumers. The very statement of the case shows the money disadvantage under which the farmer works.



It is not alone in the field labor that changes have come. The hand manufacture has gone out of the household, and the farmer now buys in the market what once was his own production. As long as the old home was in the family I looked for the candle-molds when I returned

to it; I recalled the melted tallow, and I had helped to "try it out" after the sheep were killed; I remember wicking the molds and pouring in the melted fat; and of course I could not forget the eagerness to see the product taken out the next day or the attractiveness of the long white glistening candles with the handsomely tapered end and the modest protruding wick. I can yet hear the creak of the cheese-press and the strain of the wooden frame as the weight was applied. I remember the skimmer with which the cream was taken off the pans of milk on the pantry shelves, an implement now forgotten. I know the backache in the old dash churn and recall with grief how the birds sang and the band played in the streets just when churning-day was on in the cellar; the wooden butter-bowl and the ladle completed the process. I can hear the matronly hum of the spinning-wheel and the thud of the loom. I recall how we tanned hides and made soap. In the wood-fire days, when we were burning up the forests and putting them into buildings, the lye-barrel was always standing under the tree by the grindstone, and in the soap-making season we caught the scalding lixivium as it dripped from the hardwood ashes; this enterprise was an essential part of a good farm home. The first sewing-machine I saw was set on the window-sill and was turned

by a crank; we knew it was only for the rich. Some things we unmade; I remember the first watch I saw and the curiosity to know what was inside it; and for years when I went home I found some of the wheels of it still resting in the button-box. In those days inventions and machines were not commonplace.

On all these many little manufactures we now pay a profit to someone else, and the farm must produce the income to enable us to do it. It does not occur to us, when we puzzle ourselves over the farming situation, that the farm is now loaded with a thousand expenditures that were not required in former days.

We are not to stay innovations. They stimulate new life and make for effectiveness. But there is danger in them in the fact that they may awaken an insatiable desire for mere novelty and for baubles, that have no relation to life and that are not earned by the requestor. Parents become so desirous of granting every wish that children grow up with little sense of values, with the mind so blinded by trifles and toys that realities may have no meaning. All this imposes a heavy tax on resources, far above anything known fifty years ago, and I sometimes fear that there may be no real benefit in making them. This has particular significance to the conduct of those who live with natural values and are not able to increase daily

income by an organized attack on society or by campaigns of alluring advertising.



Yet with all the mutations that have come over farming and country life the changes have not been revolutionary. The problem of production from the land, which is farming, is the same as ever even though modified and ameliorated by a thousand new practices and inventions. As far as anything is stationary, farming is the one occupation that exhibits it. Then it follows that major readjustments in other affairs, in the revolutions of transportation and commerce and in business advantages, tend to react unfavorably on the farmer's position. As he is the bottom man, living on the native soil, he cannot take it out on someone else; he cannot greatly change his personal status by means of prepared drives; he stands his ground as long as he can and then quits, and in the process he may deplete or abuse the land and leave society that much the poorer.

It is only the good farms well farmed that can support all these extra necessities and the luxuries. This means that infertile lands should not be tilled until the need for them is far greater than at present, and it is doubtful how far it will ever pay us to go in an effort to remake them.

Added to the natural difficulties of the situation are the inequalities of sumptuary legislation. We naturally reprehend blocs and class legislation and hope it will not be necessary for farming to make its headway by such means; yet we are to remember that in the United States we have been more or less governed by blocs for any number of years although we have not known the high-tariff forces for manufacturers, labor drives, and other mass movements, under that designation. If vast changes have come about in methods and in organized effectiveness it is to be expected that they must come equally in basic legislation.

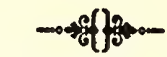
Adjustments need to be made horizontally and throughout. Wholly aside from the specific effects of high-tariff and similar legislation—and both sides of the question can be abundantly supported by citations—we are to remember the moral effect on the sentiments of the people of any trade legislation instituted by a particular caste for its benefit. There is danger even in the presumption of class benefit that is raised by such legislation. The discriminatory nature of tariff legislation in the United States is itself a greater damage than the specific favors granted to industries and groups. And the situation is all the more obnoxious from the fact that to this day the subject is obfuscated by partisan propaganda on both

sides, and the long effort to "take the tariff out of politics" has not succeeded.

My argument here is not particularly to expound any movement, for probably we have movements too many, but to express the essential difficulty in which the farmer finds himself by being a farmer, and to call attention to the fact that society as an organism has a direct concern in the situation not only in the narrow question of the cost of food supplies but in the broad requisite to safeguard the men and women who keep the earth for the good of all of us and who constitute the only real social background. The great changes in farming and in rural life, while eventuating highly to the good of the farmer, nevertheless tend to accentuate the essential difficulty of the agricultural profession and make the situation a national concern.

My own suggestion for radical modification of our political or legislative action in respect to the farmer has been made many times in recent years; I shall repeat it in due time in this little book, for it is only a sentence; it seems singularly inept to most persons and therefore there is no need of haste in presenting it. In parenthesis it may be observed that it is a pity that we are obliged to associate legislation with partisan politics as if the two were

of the same breed; it ought to be possible to enact legislation on a logical and scientific basis, and when we can do this we may consider ourselves to have arrived at civic mastery.



Frequently I am asked whether farmers of this day are really as well off as fifty and more years ago. This question cannot be answered, for much depends on the yardstick whereby we measure; nor is it safe to rely on situations that live now only in the sacred mists of memory. Yet some things are plain. We have largely changed our valuations of life. We have passed the time when men naturally lived the life of the common lot and have entered the day of accounting the incomes; every public or semi-public record of income, whether for purpose of efficiency or taxation, affixes the fiscal standard and stimulates competition or even rivalry in financial rating. We even have the assurance to place statistical values on human beings. The desire for gain becomes so dominant as to beget discontent. The bare analyses of agricultural returns, continually repeated without reassuring counsel, tend to develop this habit of mind. It would seem as if we set out laboriously to breed dissatisfactions.

If I am disturbed by the troubles of the present day, I like to go back to the agricultural

literature of fifty to one hundred years and more ago, when the art of retailing woes was less developed than with us, and read "observations on cattle, sheep and hogs," about blind drains, "the plough," pasture grounds and fencing, spring grains and early potatoes, the poultry yard, the honey bee, family salt, and specially the farm surveys and reckonings. Men then, in North America, were nearer the pioneer stage, when great tasks were to be accomplished that needed muscle and fortitude. In at least the situations I knew there was wholesome common effort and neighborhood spirit that we now try vainly to produce by means of organizers and applied pressures; the forms of expression were crude, to be sure, we had little or no bank account, but there was nothing like the current discontent. We relied wholly on our own efforts, which is an essential to success. Of course I would not go back to the old days, even if I could; undoubtedly we are evolving a new type of farmer; yet I find myself thinking that the spirits of the grandfathers and grandmothers have something to tell us when we are ready to hear. I am wondering now and then whether we have not cast off our moorings before we have named the port to which we have set sail.

Grandparents have peculiar significance in agriculture, for good farming is an affair of more than one lifetime. If one desires a real

mark of cleavage between farming and what we are pleased to call business, one will find it here,—in the fact that the land remains generation after generation and that it passes down as men come and go, home and all, carrying the same essential enterprises and its accumulated impulsion even from century to century. Farming is the only occupation that constantly renews itself: it is a perpetual resurrection.

Family continuity should be strong in agriculture. A man does not learn his land and his climate and the possibilities of his place in much less than a working lifetime. When a man takes a farm he "settles." The roving peripatetic tillers of the soil are really not farmers; they do not identify themselves with a piece of land. The man who takes the farm from his father has a strong start, if the farm is a good one and has been well kept.

The number of grandfather farms in a community has real importance. Of course there are many farms not good enough to be passed to grandsons. There are many other reasons and conditions making it impracticable or impossible for farms to remain in the family. The present pressures on farming are driving people from the poor and crabbed lands and the inaccessible places even as they are forcing out the persons not adapted to the occupation; at present this movement from the land is espe-

cially strong and we may expect it to continue until adjustment has become more or less complete. All the more impressive, therefore, are the true grandfather farms. There is great pride in any business that has continued for one hundred years, and records are made of such accomplishments. Will not someone begin a study of grandfather farms, noting those that have passed down in direct line for three generations and more as actual workable properties that make the support and the life of all these occupants?



The changes have been many since the whetstone days of my boyhood. The whole reaction in the fabric of rural life has come within this period. I have been vastly stimulated by the observation of it and know that the present days are preferable to the past. If I have no illusions as to the agricultural situation neither do I harbor any despair. I still look for wholesome changes, and I see every reason for encouragement even in the face of maladjustments. These maladjustments are largely monetary. But there are other rewards than the money income although one would hardly be aware of them from current discussions, which, in the language of the day, are set in terms of business. One would think that the achieve-

ments of civilization are to be expressed in tonnage.

These other rewards cannot be taken away by commercial and legislative movements, although, to be sure, one must have an untroubled mind to enjoy them to the best; yet if one is sensitive to what, on an earlier page, I have called the psychic income, one is able to surmount and overcome much that is discouraging. We are led to think that the farmer's value to society is in his turn-over, in the food and fiber that he can produce cheaply, but his major contribution is in the psychic or spiritual realm, and on his attainment in this range will his ultimate destiny as a person depend.



Fifty eventful years have passed. In that period we have come from conditions relatively ancient to prospects that baffle the imagination. We are in a prophetic time, our eyes to the future. The riches of life have multiplied, and the good things we may have for little effort are numberless. We may take our choice from the multitudes; we surfeit ourselves and fail of satisfaction if we try to take them all. If we give up the old we may still retain a pleasant memory of it and restrain ourselves to moderation in the present. In the midst of it all we should be able to develop a gentle philos-

ophy of life. The haying-time of those days has gone forever, and I no longer want the scythe as a major agricultural instrument; nor do I need all the contrivances of the present day.

VI

The Size of an Acre of Land

Several years ago I heard a platform orator in the West extolling the wonderful resources of his country, and among the telling periods of his oration was the declaration that the State of New York could be dropped inside the State of Idaho and room would still be left for a walk around it. I could not, of course, attempt any contradiction of this momentous fact, even if there had been any necessity of doing so; but I wanted to ask how big is an acre of land in Idaho.

After much observation of the conditions in all parts of the United States, I have come to the conclusion that an acre of land is as large in Rhode Island as in Texas. In fact, I visited a farmer in Rhode Island who was clearing above $325 an acre; and I visited a man in Texas who was making less money on a 40,000-acre ranch than a Rhode Island man was making on ten acres. In this instance an acre of land was much larger in Rhode Island than in Texas. I am sure that I could find other cases in which an acre is much larger in Texas, California and Idaho than in Rhode Island or Del-

aware, for fortunately the size of the acre is not a question of geography.



The size of an acre of land varies directly with the size of the man who manages it. The larger the man, the larger the acre. I do not know that anyone has yet determined how large an acre of land really is; but judging from the size of a plant that a woman grows in a potful of soil, it must exceed all calculations that have yet been made.

I do not know that it matters very much whether the man lives west or east or north or south,—what he puts into the land in the way of intelligence and energy he will get out of it, in the long run, in crops and live-stock and satisfaction. In a new country and under other favorable conditions, an indifferent man may reap much more than he sows; but when the first easy and simple conditions are past, this man is likely to find his land reducing itself to his own size and the acre dwindles to a half acre or a fourth acre; and the cases are not rare in which the size has shrunk so much that the man has thrown the acre away as of no further value. A man is not the best farmer until his acre grows larger every year, in produce or in serenity or in both.

I do not mean that a little farm is always to

be advised and I do not ask any person to live on one acre of land; but whether the farm is of one acre or one thousand, the productiveness of it and the satisfaction of the farm life should increase continuously, and I therefore use the acre as a text. An energetic man does not expect that his business as a store-keeper or his profession as a lawyer will be stationary after he has once entered on it; and no more need the business of a farmer be stationary. If the farmer arrives at the limit of increase with his piece of land, he may buy more land in order that his energy may find useful expression; or he may add to his farming any one of a dozen rural mercantile pursuits, as the buying and selling of farm implements, of apples, of hay, of eggs and poultry, or of general farm supplies; or he may serve himself and his community by associating in some coöperative affair in the neighborhood, as in a creamery, farmers' grain elevator, or fruit-packing association; or he may give his superfluous strength and enterprise to the church or the school, the village library or other worthy undertaking; but always he makes his acre the unit and the base of his operations, even though in the end he spreads his influence over the entire neighborhood.



It is not strange that persons left home and comforts to go into the wide and homeless

West. By nature men yearn to live their own lives and to be free. As soon as the lines of civilization become set and hard, as placards of "no hunting" and "no trespassing" and "no fishing" are put up against every piece of wood and of wild land, when "keep off" signs are on every interesting space of sward, when high walls are built about the estates and "calling days" are set aside when certain persons will see their friends, and when clothing becomes a burden, then the spirit begins to rebel, the man chafes, and if he was in North America and could find the way to do it he escaped into the encompassing and boundless West. He appropriated the naked earth in order that he might have a free hand.

As I write these words, I see little cabins placed far out in the pitiless sage-brush deserts, the occupants of them foregoing shade and water and parents and church and roads and school, only that they may be free. It is the spirit that brought the Pilgrims to the cold North American continent, that settled the wilderness beyond the Hudson, that explored the St. Lawrence, that charted the great Northwest Territory from which several noble states have been made, that set Lewis and Clark, and Whitman, and Fremont, and hundreds of hardy explorers into the vast expanses of the region beyond the Mississippi, that developed the immense expanse of Canada.

All regions and realms have been conquered

by those who have left the roof-tree. One person may have gone for gain, one to establish a home, one to await the development of the country, one to found a mission and a church and a school, another to find the country that lies beyond; but at the bottom this onward migration expresses the unrest of the soul under any form of civilization that sets bounds to human action or draws a curtain across the imagination. Men will always see visions, and no power can hinder them.

The opportunities have been unbounded in the wonderful West for those who have courage and who foresee the future; and these opportunities are probably not less today than they were in years gone by. The very democracy of the pioneer cabin and the "prove-up" shack, that level accidental distinctions between men, allows the latent qualities to develop. All settlers "throw in" together. The lure of the new opportunities takes men on, and away from their limitations. Against this compelling opportunity of the West, all the old eastern states must set forth the opportunities that lie also in their acres, and put before the imagination of the young people the undeveloped agricultural resources of the eastern regions, for these states must have a thrifty rural population if they develop the best kinds of institutions. In the end, there will be much less unproductive or waste land in the thirteen

first states than in those of the Rocky Mountains and the western coast. The agricultural West has been better known to persons born in the East than has the agricultural East to persons born in the West, but latterly there has been some change of sentiment in these regards.



Out of the multitudes who have gone into the abounding West, many have found the rainbow and have builded at its end. Many, also, have found it not and have had no power and no volition to make a further journey. So the vast West has been settled, by good folk and indifferent, by the far-seeing, the adventurous, but always by the courageous. We hear the reports of all those who have found the pot of gold, but no word of those who saw the rainbow only when they left the old home. I have seen the bow of promise all over and across the continent; and I am sure that the pot of treasure is at its end whether in the abundant cotton lands of the South, the sweeping prairies of the regions beyond the middle longitudes, or in the homeful swardlands of New England. I have seen men digging for this treasure under burning skies, on sweeping sand-plains of the deserts, on heights overlooking the western seas, and in the quiet reaches along far northeastern streams; and whenever the acre

of land was big, they have found the pot of gold.

I once asked an old gardener how much land he had and he said with pride that he had one acre; and he added, "It is a wonderful acre; it reaches to the center of the earth in one direction and it takes in the stars in the other." This man's farm included not only the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but it contained the entire rainbow.



I would not send one person to the land who does not by instinct belong there, but I would drop a suggestion into the minds of those who have reason to think they would make husbandmen. Society swings between two poles. One pole is the syndicated and corporate interests. The other pole is the laboring class. By nature both classes tend to be lawless,—one class by having laws made in its own interest, the other by taking the law into its own hands. Heroic efforts are being made to bring these poles of experience together and to weld them into one harmony, but with only indifferent success.

Between these two stands the great land-owning and land-working class, steady, conservative, abiding by the laws as they are made, and constituting the balance-force or middle

wheel of society and of all the confident nations. These men and women on the land are needed in every part of the country, as well in one geographical region as in another. A good part of any people should establish families on the land; for city properties come and go, and stocks pass on and away, but on the land one may found a dynasty. Some persons prefer to found their dynasties under one sky and some under another; but speaking broadly, one great region is not better than another. But a dynasty is founded only when the family settles and abides, and not when it moves forever on.

Men pay one thousand dollars and more an acre for land in some parts of the irrigated West. These are very large acres, for the man dreams about them. And this is why the acres are so very large,—because they attract the type of mind that will give one thousand dollars for them. But if one were to put one hundred dollars of his thousand into an acre or two in the older regions and then put the remaining nine hundred dollars into the same acres, his results would probably be as great in one case as in the other, although it does not follow that the results would be profitable. The East needs to feel the kind of courage that drives the hopeful West and to know the money value of visions when they learn how to cash them in. Not all the good and forceful folk have left any region, and probably none of the lands in North

America is completely worn out; but there are some regions that need a quickening of the spirit as to the size and importance of an acre of land. In many cases, courage is more important than fertilizer.

Life on the land should provide something of the independence and freedom that strong men crave. Undoubtedly there is danger ahead of us, in restrictions we little realize; our rapidly developing financial agencies and marketing systems may themselves become burdensome, and by dictating a man's cropping scheme they may cause men to cry out for relief and for the chance to determine their own destiny even at the risk of less money income.

As a region matures, the unrestraint necessarily diminishes; but the man can still secure freedom if not too much hampered by outside regulation, by making the most of his acre and by knowing all the nature about him,—for a man must be a good naturalist if he is to have the information and the resources that a farmer needs. A man's freedom lies largely in his way of thinking.

I do not know how large an acre of land may be, but I know that it may raise a wholesome product to help feed and clothe a needful man, and that it may yield industry and self-dependence and unyielding faith to sustain a needful people.

I went from Providence to San Antonio. I

had been told that Rhode Island is not as large as Texas, but it looked just as big. In all the journey, across many states and over plains and mountains, I noted that the landscapes were everywhere the same size. The horizon was the edge of the world and the welkin was the dome of the sky. I realized that everywhere I was within the vast democracy of nature. A farm is a landscape. What the landscape and the expanse really mean to a man depends on himself, on his valor and his insight. Whether he knows it or not, he should experience something like a poetic (that is, a spiritual) response to his surroundings. Lowell declares that "the landscape, forever consoling and kind, pours her wine and her oil on the smarts of the mind." Lanier is touched of the limitless marshes, Swinburne of the North Sea "lonelier than ruin," Kipling of the hills, Timrod of the town and the factory's smoke, Wordsworth of "the sylvan slopes, with corn-clad fields."

VII

Homesteads and Democracy

It was a long way I had come, across a half dozen states, to be present on one of the evenings of Farmers' Week in Missouri. I passed several great cities and many villages and hamlets. In all the cities was evidence of activity, trade was moving, goods piled high on platform and truck, many persons coming and going and often in haste. In all the spaces between, there were few persons to be seen; there was little movement, no evidence of activity, few consignments and trucks of goods; the regions seemed singularly inactive and vacant. The visitor from Mars would suppose that all the ideas and all the progress come out of the cities.

Here on the program I read that the Shelby Farmers' Band that had entertained the convention "has headquarters nine miles from a railroad station." This fact is startling enough to be featured in the announcement; yet seventy-five years ago it would not have been stated; the city had not then gained its dominance.

Ideas and hopes and bold convictions rise up in these open places where crops grow and where herds feed quietly. The ideas that grew

in such regions largely fashioned the fabric of the Republic and entered into the constitution under which we are glad to live. They have gone into the laws of the land. Politicians listen for these ideas. Congress heeds them. The opinion of the open country is a quiet mighty force, counting for stability and yet for bold constructive movements. Probably it is as strong even today as the opinion of the cities, because it is born of background situations beyond which there is no appeal; and this opinion is rapidly growing.

There is a persistent assumption abroad that these country people want or need (or at least should have) a village or city life, to relieve them from loneliness and tedium; farm villages and communities are planned to this end. This is an assumption of city people, or of those who do not find their life-work in the open country. It is by no means an assumption of country people.

But even if some phases of city life are desirable, the farm village and the hamlet do not often provide them, nor do they give any considerable number of special advantages, and they are likely to develop many decided disadvantages. The farmer riding his tractor is not lonely; at night, when he is not too tired, he may derive more mental nourishment from his paper or bulletin or magazine than he can hope to obtain from the usual entertainments

of the towns. Perhaps his lack of these entertainments is one reason why his opinions are so much worth while. The farmer's wife on the modern good farm in a good country is not lonely because of that fact, for she has a real occupation and does not need to have programs made for her. The idea that farmers are lonesome and need entertainment has been overworked, and it is time we stopped worrying about it. Of course there are deficiencies in these regards; but situations have marvelously changed in the last dozen years, in the good farming regions; and in places not good for farming, the problem is to put the regions to other uses.

There is every indication that decentralization must grow. The motor car and the truck and the constructed roads make it possible; the rural free delivery, the telephone, the radio, portable lighting outfits, heating devices, adaptable machinery, also make it possible. Farmers have money to lend, in good times, where some years ago they carried only mortgages. The pioneer days are gone. The resources at the command of the farmer at his own home are increasing at an astonishing rate. The machinery, appliances and equipment that the modern farm must have are beyond our dreaming of a generation ago. These improvements are too expensive to leave to the care of hired men, renters and tenants.

Homesteads and Democracy

If the open country is to make its best contribution to society, it must be lovely as well as productive. It requires better house-keeping in fields, roadsides, yards, plantings, upkeep of buildings and premises. To this end we need to transfer some of the stress, in our teaching, from commercial ends to the productive habit of attractiveness.

It is time we saw a decided check to the habit of the farmer to move to town. The problem immediately ahead of us is not the centralization of agriculture but the decentralization of cities.

Democracy rests on the solid opinions of separate men and women. The cry of the crows is not democracy. Resolutions passed by organizations do not make democracy, or may not even give it expression. Mass drives of classes do not further democracy. The demands and the passions of the streets do not condition it; they are likely rather to retard it. The statesman always wants to get back of the resolutions and the demands and the drives and the crowds to the opinions of men and women, if the men and women are free.



It is reported that the old-time farm homestead is passing. A writer who crossed the country in a pullman car has recently said so. One

may readily receive that impression, particularly in parts of the western country where the end of the pioneer stage has been reached and the original structures have not been rebuilt, and specially where tenantry is prominent. The scarcity and cost of good farm labor and the taxing of improvements have resulted in many unkempt properties and roadsides. There has been great shift in rural population, in spite of the fact that we are wont to think of farming settlement as permanent and to interpret any radical change in it as failure or decadence. It is true, also, that many homesteads have served their time and passed. The ratio of farm population is falling; the former ratio is not now needed.

Yet farm homesteads remain, with all the prides and accumulating traditions. Those who know the open country, away from parlor cars and movies, know also where to find them. They are real houses, with room for children and the storage of liberal supplies; they are big enough for comfort. These good homesteads are as satisfying and resourceful as ever, with an added quality reflecting the abounding days in which we live. I am sometimes glad that they are not too many or too prominent; I like the element of reserve in them. They do not patronize anybody, but they express the land on which they stand.

All good farmers know that we must main-

tain the producing-power of the land and the beauty of the earth: this is reflected in homesteads. Whether the danger of depleting the land and despoiling the beauty is near or remote, the obligation still rests on us. In what spirit we approach our work, do we make our contribution to our fellow men. In a democracy, the people is the state. As the people are, so the state will be.

From these premises the reader will observe that in this book I am speaking of the state of affairs as I think it particularly affects agriculture and rural life. For this state of affairs we are all responsible: it expresses the stage of social development at which we have now arrived. Therefore I do not criticize any legislative body or program or complain of any government under which men live. The world does not desire to be against the farmer. I fear that the rural people often seek aid where in the nature of the case it cannot be found.



You will ask me what the farmer needs from the party politician. He ought to need nothing. Yet so necessary is the habit of the politician to appeal for "support" and to make promises to secure it that the farmer, along with other persons, has come to look for the proposals that candidates and platforms offer him.

And thereby is disclosed a fundamental fault in political systems. Solutions do not lie in promises or in the programs of expediency. They do not issue from the partisanships of campaigns. They do not arise from the flaying of the other party. Progress may be made here and there in the course of time, but it is incidental to party success.

The farmer looks to the political party for help because he may not know where else to look. He asks for a candidate who will understand him and perhaps represent him. He may not know just what he wants, but he is sure there is unbalance somewhere and that he wants something. He takes the fairest promise and program in return for his vote, or else, like other men, he accepts a party name.

The mere statement of the usual political method is sufficient to condemn it as a solvent of financial and social difficulties. Partisanship is not competent to solve the ills, from the fact that it is partisanship; it does not start with the fair and open mind and it is not disinterested. It is interested in "success" rather than in solutions. It likes to settle questions, but it may not solve them. It is not until we shall have passed bi-party politics, as now understood, that we can look for the orderly and certain approach to the solving of the difficulties of society. The very forces we set in motion soon stop the relief. If politics were interested

primarily in solutions, we should not have such movements. We are educating farmers in natural science: the scientific method is the antipode of the common political method and it is not involved with personal rivalries nor do its proposals need to recruit friends for support. We deplore the fact that we have extremists; very well, political partisanship tends to breed them.

We are still taught to think in terms of "measures." We must enact these measures into laws. We receive some help, then we have more measures and more laws; and very likely the reasons for the difficulties are never understood. There is always the danger that legislation, when stampeded by public pressure, will do too much rather than too little. We have become expert in describing symptoms. We have tons of reports on them.

Any person who has followed the rural situation for a term of years has been amused by the efforts to control natural phenomena by legislation. Some years ago, when there was shortage of beef, it was seriously proposed that Congress enact a law making it a misdemeanor for a farmer to veal his calves. The farmers opposed it as a piece of nonsense and many persons were called on to explain the situation. I remember that I presented the subject in a public forum, and "Making beef by law" was published in one of my forgotten books. All

that seems long ago, yet the date was only 1914.

The farmer ought not to need to be mentioned in any party platform. If justice is developed, no occupation or class of people should be mentioned, any more than in the Constitution of the United States. If a man's product and situation are protected and safeguarded, the man is safeguarded.

Political platform utterances on agriculture are likely to be pitifully inadequate. A few glorious phrases and the mention of a number of desirable proposals do not take us very far. Every time we separate the farmer from the rest of the people we injure both him and the people. Every agricultural question is a city question, and every producer's problem is a consumer's problem.

Every "labor" problem is also a farm problem. Every profiteering question finds its way back to the land. The food and other land-supplies of the people cannot be produced on the method of a forty-four-hour week, nor by any process of evasion of work or responsibility or the "control" of commercial affairs. The contention of Labor for a very short work-day and a five-day week is based largely on the nerve-exhausting and impersonal nature of factory work; this in no way applies to the farmer; his time is all his own, and when he hires labor he should be able to manage it to meet his par-

ticular separate requirements, always assuming him to be considerate and humane. We shall never get very far, anyway, in our social solutions until we cease talking about hours and the length of the day and the time to quit. The work of civilization can never be performed on the basis of bargaining on how little we must do.

The primary requisites of the race are the supplies of food, raiment and shelter. To safeguard these supplies is the first responsibility of society and government. This is simply elementary common-sense. All the fine social schemes and "adjustments" and party programs grow thin and pale before this problem. What boots it to fix up a truce between employer and employee, if we must go hungry and cold in the process? It is not a solution to find an adjustment that will allow work to be resumed. It is not a solution to enact ever so good a law on rural credits, or to pass appropriations bills. While we are resolving and commissioning on outbreaks here and there, what about the yield of wheat?

Because we have always had wheat, we think we shall continue to have it. We forget that we are now living in a different proportion between production and population. We overlook the risks of climate and weather under which land-supplies must be produced. We forget that wages in cities affect yields of foodstuffs. We forget that standards of living have risen.

(Probably these physical standards are relatively too high in all lines of life in North America.)

We think the strike and the lockout and the corner, and other forms of hold-up, are powerful weapons. But there are far more powerful forces than these in the background. Suppose the farmers do not produce the necessary supplies, what then? They will not strike; they will not even agree to lay off or stay home. They will do the best they can; they cannot do more. The silent power of relative inactivity, without any agreement or conspiracy or plan, even without choice, will make every other political and social force look as soft as sand.

The technical farming problems, having to do with fertility and rotation and diseases of plants and animals, are handled in a scientific way (that is, a non-partisan way) by the experiment stations and colleges. There is a vast line of regulatory and commercial problems so difficult of solution and so far-reaching in their effect that they should not be confused by the processes of glorious campaigning. The problems of marketing and credits and labor adjustments cannot be met by means of "propositions." No man is yet wise enough to know the solutions of these questions.

The remedies lie in the attitude of mind, in the way in which we are willing to approach the subject, and specially in recognition of the

fact that none of these questions now troubling us is a separate problem to be settled or adjusted only in the interest of the parties in dispute.

This implies a conscious public policy in respect to agriculture, and the end of our drifting pointless laissez-faire. It means that people in the urban centers, as elsewhere, should develop an interest in agriculture as a human and social subject, and not desire its betterment merely to enable the farmers to purchase more goods.



The outstanding problem before the world today, as men and women assuming some measure of social sanity and looking to the future, is to see that justice is assured before the situations become so bad that we are called on to remedy injustice. Any system of *ex post facto* remedies, of locking the stable after the horse is stolen, is a pitiful exhibition of inefficiency and impotency. What is the purpose of government in this latter time if it is not to set the house in order, to anticipate conflicts of the classes, to establish a form of oversight that will maintain continuous investigations into the relations of opposed interests and to remove the injustices and dangers? Shall we nurture the seeds of selfishness and not expect to reap the harvest? Must the contestants

make war on society that grievances may be heard? Is the old Anglo-Saxon remedy by petition dead amongst us? Are there no prophylactics in politics? Are we still children playing with public affairs? After twenty centuries, have we not yet learned the lesson of the foolish virgins?

If remedies are real, they must begin at the sources. The homesteads scattered far and wide, expressing a piece of productive land, are essential starting-points.

VIII

The Surplus

A new philosophy has come into farming within the last score of years, even within the half score. It has come from industrialism, where production may be controlled by arbitrary means and where the output of men may be set to definite bounds and strictly limited. It comes from the realm of monopoly.

In former time it was supposed to be a man's natural obligation to produce that of which he was capable, at least in those circumstances in which he was working for himself. Now a man, in many trades and occupations, apparently has little incentive to do his most; his personal capabilities, even his desires, are controlled, in corporate industries, by conditions of trade. He may not or cannot express himself at his best. This is the result of working for others, whereby a man's product is no longer closely identified with himself. Society condones this recession of personal accomplishment, even applauds it. The result may be either good or ill.

This under-production is said to be a necessity, even though people may be direfully in

need of the product. The necessity is the urgency of profit.

The increase in a man's producing-power, both in the factory and on the farm, has raised the modern problem of over-production. In the field of agriculture it particularly involves certain staple products. No one knows how long the over-production (if it exists) will continue, but heretofore production in all agricultural commodities has been subject to great variation; it is temporary and seasonal or at least not inherently permanent; and in the long run all peoples, in their higher development, tend to consume their farm products. At the moment the surplus problem has assumed outstanding importance in a few kinds of agriculture, both intrinsically and because the question has become involved in politics; it is so much involved that the problem is obscured, and perhaps solutions have been delayed by the very act of insisting on them as political measures even though we have no criticisms. However, it amounts to a national recognition of marketing systems for farm products.

The decline in values of farm property and the lack of recovery as compared with many industries are indications of a dangerous situation, as well also as the necessity to foreclose farm mortgages on an extensive scale by banks, mortgage loan associations, and other lending

agencies; much land is yet held as collateral, with the selling price of staples often below cost of production; under such conditions it is difficult to see how these farms, many of them good and productive, can be restored to effective private ownership. The question has assumed great urgency because of the deflation following the War; such deflation vitally affects the source because the farmer cannot pass along the loss or at least the adjustment to someone else: the problem runs finally into the ground. It is complicated also by the limited purchasing-power of many other countries; and I do not think the discussions of international debts have helped us.



Without stopping for the moment to consider the surplus as a financial or political problem, we must recognize the fact that production makes the man. We are wont to say that it is a person's duty or responsibility to deliver his fullest or at least his best output, but it is much more than that if he is to express himself completely and make the most of himself; it is his privilege. It is the privilege of the architect to plan buildings; this makes him an architect. It is the privilege of a builder to construct buildings, of an artisan to make the most of his trade, of a craftsman to turn out

his best and completest product, of a farmer to produce crops and live-stock. Any teaching that discourages production on the part of the farmer is a weakening and devitalizing philosophy and will work toward his undoing from the very fact that it prevents him from doing the best of which he is capable and using his skill to the greatest advantage. His production has in it also a major public-service element.

The productivity, quality and personality of men and women is the fundamental good, and the progress of society must rest on this fact; this is inescapable and cannot be gainsaid by any species of subterfuge or sophistry.

If industrious production of farm supplies creates an actual overplus and works to the pecuniary hardship of the farmer, then of course remedies must be sought. No man should be expected to labor without financial reward, or to live without a fair share of productive leisure. These remedies are mostly in the line of adjustments. These adjustments come about slowly, and are the result of foresight on the part of the leaders of affairs and the makers of events. Rarely are solutions instantly possible, when the conditions have become unbearable. We are to approach the problem from the premise that the individual farmer should be given the opportunity to

make the most of himself; the other questions must be adjusted to this condition.



If there is consistent over-production of agricultural supplies, then there are too many farmers, not too much production to the acre or to the man. If there is usual oversupply in certain staples only, then diversification of production is clearly the solution. If improved distribution and marketing cannot take care of the production with profit then there should be less production, but it does not follow (as commonly assumed) that we should advocate less total acreage or yield to a farmer. The situation will adjust itself in time, although the adjustment should be much safer if intelligently directed. City population is increasing; the ratio of farming population is decreasing.

Eventually we shall arrive at a workable program as to the number of farmers required to produce the needed supplies. Eventually, also, we shall know how to balance our agricultural production so that demand and supply will be measurably reciprocal and compensatory. This is not a problem for politics or even for government. The conclusions must come as the result of careful study in a socio-scientific

temper, and must be in the form of advice by good leaders who do not complicate the problem by running for office. Out of the profusion of studies and investigations in all kinds of welfare questions we should soon be in sight of an actual synthesis as to the very function of agriculture itself. This is the problem before us, a fundamental practical philosophy of the situation.



No one pretends, who has given the subject serious consideration, that agriculture is properly placed or balanced in the systems of things, or that the farming people as a whole receive sufficient income from their investment, labor and risk. The recent reported rapid decline in tilled-crop areas in the United States is suggestive. This imparity is not because any persons or any sets of agencies will that it shall be so: it is the result of the way in which society has developed, although undoubtedly another kind of development might have been foreseen even if it were not possible to bring it about. We have been investigating the details of agricultural production and inventory and marketing for two generations, ever since we recognized that agriculture is really a subject for careful study by the scientific method. Time is now come for a few major generaliza-

tions that will set agriculture in its proper place in the scheme of human affairs.

We must make special allowance for the element of risk, which is particularly heavy in agriculture. There are endless hazards of weather, to which are to be added the immanence of pests and of diseases in plants and animals. The weather risk is specially serious in times of low income because the farmer cannot employ sufficient labor to take advantage quickly of changing conditions. And beyond all this is the contingency that markets may change radically before the product is made; the crops are planned a year or so before they are marketed, and in the case of fruit-crops several years intervene as well also as in the breeding of herds; in general farming, the rotation is determined years ahead; the competing crops of other countries cannot be foretold; it is impossible to meet the market with any such definiteness as in the manufacturing industries. These risks affect the prospects and living conditions of whole regions and therefore transcend in importance the hazards of an individual business. For all these reasons a surplusage in agricultural production takes on a more sinister aspect than in factories and merchandising. The wisest teachers do not know how to make the farm readjust itself quickly to the fluctuations of supply and demand, or to express itself in a card-index. Yet we are in

the habit of figuring only money costs in the making of a single crop. The margin allowed the farmer as a living profit should be broader than in other occupations.

The need is urgent for readjustment of taxation on farm property. The problem has been repeatedly uncovered and yet the inequalities remain. This burden is more constant than the dangers of surplus production. Not only is the farmer's property tangible and assessable, but the expenses of government mount rapidly for all the people.

There is outstanding need of a thorough and comprehensive land-survey to determine the general adaptability of the regions in any State to the main agricultural enterprises, to the end that production may be more closely matched with supply so that a farmer's work will not be in vain. This is a very different undertaking from the present soil-surveys. The subject of acid and alkali soils should be worked out in terms of geographical areas and of the settlement on those areas. Hilgard long ago pointed out that the larger part of farm-practice had been evolved on alkaline lands; we may need to make not only a rearrangement of cropping systems for the great areas of acid lands but perhaps a different kind of mental adjustment.

We should know what regions ought to be devoted to other purposes than ordinary cropping, what areas should go into forest, which ones are adapted only to general or mixed farming, what should be the size of holdings for best results.

We should bring the householders in from the lands that by nature are not adapted to husbandry in the present epoch. Such evaluations may proceed on the general theory of zoning systems for cities, now so well supported by public opinion and court decisions. It is not necessary that farming populations be moved or redistributed or that lands be condemned for this purpose or, in fact, that legal pressures be applied: a good survey of the kind here suggested, properly published and distributed, would accumulate a powerful moral influence and would shape the course of settlement of the rural communities as time goes on and as properties naturally change hands. We talk much about the moving of the farm population to town; the real problem is the movement of population within agriculture itself, and this should receive the attention of the coming generation.

It is shocking that we have not worked out comprehensive state systems of this nature, if no further than to designate the regions that ought not to be regularly farmed but devoted to forests or other uses, and to put into actual

operation real systems of forestry whereby lands once farmed may be brought under coördinate control of towns, counties and state in active and sensible development for timber and other products. This is a larger question than State parks or reservations or preserves. It is a State program that would touch the very bottom of the financial and social welfare of the commonwealth, for in the end these considerations will condition the existence of the body politic. We have here the need of positive statesmanship; in comparison with this need, the usual political pronouncements and campaign slogans are sadly small and superficial.



In the meantime there will be hardships. They are as likely to increase as to diminish. These may be ameliorated by special action of legislative bodies, but such actions must not be regarded as solutions and perhaps most of them are of doubtful value.

I am not discouraging the use of expedients for the relief of pressing hardships, but I wish to distinguish sharply between panaceas and remedies, and to ask for a more thorough and candid uncovering of the entire situation in which farming finds itself in the development of society. In the nature of the case, solutions do not lie in the findings of governmental com-

missions working under momentary pressures. Recommendations may be made by them for legislation that may relieve or mollify; but the best work any commission can do is to state the underlying causes of the difficulties: yet this would seem to be only vague and theoretic and would probably not suit anybody. We give relatively too much attention to crises and depressions.

Solutions of these underlying kinds are not directly pecuniary. We are blinded by the rapidity of discoveries and by the material additions to life, so much so that we habitually appraise life in terms of prices; these additions are pleasant; but scientific discovery, material goods, and what we ignorantly call "progress", are not part of civilization until they are incorporated in the soul rather than added to the inventory and worn on the body. The fundamental weakness of the constituted affairs of our day is that they are founded so much on finances, as if gain and loss of property were the essential concern of the aspiring human animal.

We run wild on figures. Statistics are of course indispensable records but they are likely to become so dominant as to supplant observation. They have an appearance of finality they do not possess. They can never take the place of wisdom. They may be guides to business but are not measures of life. Even the greatest

accumulations of available statistics cover but a short space and they are all imperfect or incomplete; and every writer may draw his own conclusions. Probably we are misled by some of the figures recently current. The graph has come to be accepted almost as a proof; but it is only a visualization of statistics or numericals, and in many ranges can have no such value as a plain statement of judgment by a competent person.

We are all the time measuring and weighing, but this may not lead to understanding. We are so near our problems of production and trade that we cannot see them, and the moment we begin to discuss them we are lost in a forest of details,—of figures, facts and incidents; we are likely to miss the fundamental meanings. I am not looking for great generalizations to come from the study of cold commercial statistics represented in columns and tables. I fancy we need quite a different approach to many of our agricultural difficulties.



We begin, indeed, to recognize the fundamental weakness or failure of a civilization founded on the ledger, and there is a school of thought that would found it on social organization. But the social basis—as now commonly advanced—is as faulty as the monetary, because

it is founded on "the group" and not on the person. We are gradually shifting responsibility from the person to the aggregation, and society is becoming a contest for leadership between social groups. Democracy is by no means the covering up of the individual in the man. The most important "group" is still the family.

The approach to the agricultural situation is human, that is biological. The first consideration is to reach and stimulate the man and woman. The farmer must depend on his land rather than on his market. The man's product will be the measure of his worth if he is skillful and sensitive in the rearing of it. In time we ought to recognize and measure this product in a new kind of money, in a currency founded on energy expended toward a result, much as we measure mechanical forces by horse-power and electric energy by watts. The unit of measurement may indeed be arbitrary but it need not be fictitious as in the case of money founded on the fortuitous supply of a metal that is itself an article of commerce and conditioned on mining, and which is subject thereby to violent fluctuations in quotation. A good part of our recent agricultural difficulty lies in the commercial inconstancy in the value of money.

Bear in mind that we are not to measure the man by his hours, but by the energy expended in a certain output. Mere time is worth

nothing. The rewards of life are the results of industry and excellence.

Civilization is a biological phenomenon. Peculiarly is farming a biological fact. We need every close and honest study in finances and sociology and in what are called the natural sciences, and all the true and clear figures we can assemble, in order that eventually, in some way, we may interpret them in terms of men and women.



It is the farmer's rare privilege to raise crops and rear animals. The sheer joy of the thing is itself a reward: it is this reward that I wish to recognize in this little book and to defend against the invasion of mere statistical and commercial valuations. There is no competition in this kind of satisfaction, no surplus. Fortunately, most persons do not engage in farming solely for the banking income; probably most of them come into the occupation by a kind of inheritance or family example, bringing with them traditional and intensely human valuations of the day's work; the effort to express the worth of this day's work only as a formal monetary income takes the very life out of the occupation. It is good to have one great range of human production in which a good half of the income is psychic. It will be a calamity if we sacrifice this vast reward by insist-

ing so exclusively on a financial or business view of agriculture. By such insistence we shall make the occupation sordid.

We may as well recognize at the start that agriculture does not provide a means of amassing fortunes. Herein lies a good part of its value to society, in a time when we wish to become rich without hard labor. With no temptation of great wealth, life should be kept simple and sweet, the day's labor should have significance and express a man's originality. We may honor this measured income and help the farmer to make other uses of his life and opportunities. We need have no fear that the farming occupation will be broken on the giddy wheel of "prosperity."

Wealth is not to be disparaged: the merit of the question lies not in the extent of the accumulation but in the method by which it is acquired, in the character that develops in the exercise of the method, by the use that is made of the income. But the only point we need to make in this connection is the fact that another kind of income is possible, one that is not merely the cultural expression of habitual leisure and avocation but the steady essential concomitant of the day's work and the year's living, such as obtains when farming is its own reward.

Affluence that has been acquired by unusual ability and character and that contributes to

public prosperity and welfare is not only defensible but desirable; it is always needful, especially in a democracy, to reward unusual ability and character, particularly if freely dispensed for social good rather than hoarded. On the other hand, riches procured by cornering the market, by creating unnatural conditions, accumulating surpluses for private gain and hoarding, that does not develop public quality in the acquirer or contribute distinctly to the welfare of society, is always to be reprehended, no matter how much it comes within statute law, and as rapidly as society matures we shall outlaw it. We shall prevent speculation that a few persons may become rich without adding anything to wealth. Some day persons who acquire opulence without contributing in the process to wealth and welfare will be nuisances or worse.

We must find the way to allow the farmer the full satisfaction of producing bountiful crops, increasing them every year if he can do so, without penalizing him for the effort. A man must produce abundant crops just to be a good farmer; a good yield in one crop in the scheme is necessary to make the field-rotation and other farm management worth while, otherwise he is a mere cropper and misuses his land. It is the farmer who makes good yields who at the same time conserves his fertility and thereby safeguards the future. Only good

farmers produce good crops year after year, taking pride in the result; and our great need is good farmers.

As more or less rational human beings, we must be concerned to sustain the spirit of the farmer, for the maintenance of fertility, and therefore the welfare of future generations, is in his keeping. His occupation must not be debased. By all means we cannot afford to have him become a chronic complainer or sulky or to assume a hostile attitude toward other elements of society. Already we have too much of such hostility in our affairs, although the result is not so serious in other occupations in which the keepership of the earth is not involved.

Even as a commercial question, we cannot avoid the necessity of keeping the farmer an enthusiastic producer, if we look any distance into the future. I have not been able to alarm myself over the supposed approaching calamities due to over-population of the earth; but if Malthusianism holds (as taught by the new school) then the obligation to increase production is commanding and inescapable and it becomes the major agricultural problem.

Along with this necessity, we must make it more and more unpopular for all kinds of exploiters to skin the earth. We must save the natural produce and safeguard it, protect the streams and the lands, curb land-grabbers,

avoid wanton waste of fertility and materials, the locking up of areas and resources for personal greed, and discourage all breeds of piracy. In those days there will be few pirates but many poets.

Personal ownership of land and family farming are implied in the satisfactions I have here indicated and which have been the chief rewards in farming up to this time. I do not know how many farms there are in the world, but in the United States are more than six millions of them. We do not know where to breed families as well as on the farm, from the fact that the farm is a coöperative enterprise in which every member of the family has a stake; every boy and girl has actual (not make-believe or time-serving) duties and responsibilities, and these privileges cannot be supplanted by recreation clubs or camping activities or by manual schooling or other substitutes. The farmer works for himself. His agencies of outside coöperation are for the purpose of selling products: he does not need to bargain to sell labor directly, and he retains his personal independence. If he is lazy he injures himself; he is not a shirker, for shirking is taking advantage of someone else. The tendency to make farming merely a business, and to talk about it only in commercial terms,

is one of the most dangerous attitudes of this our glorious day.

Of course no man knows what will be the farming of the future. We need not try to foretell. But even with all the beautiful social schemes, we have not yet found a substitute for the family. The effort to let the school take the place of the family has failed. It is said that in the future we are to have corporation farms of 5000 acres and more. Perhaps; this prophecy regards farming only as an industry. If so, the world will be ruled entirely by corporations, agricultural, industrial, commercial, professional, for the corporations would control government: we shall have a government of corporations rather than of persons. Farm workers will then be operatives, and we shall extend the capital-and-labor problems into a new and limitless field. With no separate patriarchal units of importance there will be a benevolent urbanism (York State Rural Problems, ii. 133) and democracy, as we now conceive it, will be difficult or impossible.

This idea of corporationizing agriculture rests on the fallacious doctrine that we must have cheap food. The nearer the production approaches a surfeit or surplus the better will it be, under this conception, for the privileged and the industries. This is an ancient and hoary attitude toward farming, to the effect that the farmer must produce very cheaply in

order that the towns and industry may prosper; it runs through most of our thinking. Yet the farmer is entitled to as high a scale of living and to as much leisure as any other man. He should not be asked to receive a smaller part of the national earnings than other persons of equal ability and industry, particularly as he carries the obligation to maintain the productivity of the earth. This subject I have elsewhere discussed in its relations to social and political affairs ("The demand for cheap food" in the book What is Democracy?) and only a protest need be entered here.

If this corporationism comes into existence, one wonders how long it will last and whether, after trial, there will be a backward swing toward separate independent family life. Let it be said, however, that we have not yet found the way permanently to corporationize agricultural production as a whole with financial profit. Certain kinds of farming, as the growing of wheat and other great staples, lend themselves well to such schemes. In these cases the problems, in new regions, are largely of a mechanical and engineering nature and the bold organization of those forces is capable of producing great results; but the biological factors finally overtake and master the mechanical, for fertility must be maintained and this requires something in the nature of diversification and varying practice and close adaptation

to local conditions, and any number of pests and difficulties must be controlled; in the end, wheat-raising becomes a part of general farming. The growing of wheat is still very different from the manufacture of nails or shoes.

We do not yet know how long we can profitably maintain productivity by wholesale large-area practices; eventually the pressures of population and movement of commercial frontiers demand the subdivision of the great estates and hinder large-scale developments. In measuring the ultimate results of such enterprises, the social and political effects in the region, and the maintenance of productivity, are to be calculated along with the pounds of wheat, cotton or rice. In agriculture perhaps we have a range of affairs in which, for the most part, human units will remain more important than commercial units. Do those prophets who would industrialize all production really wish to take the farm out of the family? Factories are essentially alike anywhere. Farms are as diverse as the valleys, hills and plains. Shall we try to cast all farmers in the same mold?

But even so, it does not follow that the human units shall remain forever undirected. The perfect directing should result from the best intelligence applied by the farmers themselves both to farming and to the common affairs of the rural communities, but something

more than this may be needed. The inexpert handling of farms is a prime concern of society at large, and is today a major problem. Perhaps we shall find a way to supervise or even to regulate the farming of a community without sacrificing the independence and initiative of farm families; possibly the county agent system may eventuate into something of this kind. The existing type of rural organization ("coöperative" and otherwise) will probably not accomplish much in the way of organic results and very likely it will not be of long duration.



It is indeed a strange situation when the abundance of a man's labor reacts against him. It means that the forces of society discourage the exercise of his best effort. There have been many rallying-points and many expedients in the discussion of agricultural difficulties in the past fifty years, but the problem of the surplus is the strangest of them all. It will seem stranger still in years to come. One wonders what the next doctrine will be. Yet the surplus problem (or at least the distribution problem) is an outstanding reality at present in certain of the staple products.

It is not my purpose to try to account for what, in the past two or three years, we have called the agricultural depression. Nor am I

attempting a discussion of the surplus as such, —I am using it only as a text. These depressions are periods, not the effects of detached causes. The meaning of them probably lies in the synchronisms of inflation and deflation and of other related tendencies, in the cycles that come and go. It is the part of the great sciences, proceeding with a biological intention, to discover the causes and the orbits of these occurrences and so to expound them to the public that legislative and other betterments may be set going long before the synchronisms result in hardships.

The present agitation over the surplus, that amounts to something like a national upheaval, revolves about the proposal to set up an export corporation with the idea of equalizing the receipts from the exported surplus with the domestic price; the cost of equalization (or making up the difference) is to be met by a fee assessed against the product sold in domestic markets. It is a cumbersome project that might not work in practice; there might be legal, regulatory, taxational, and constitutional complications. It is difficult to see how it would aid agriculture as a whole, it might establish a dangerous supervisorship, and it might play into the hands of certain middlemen or industrial agencies. It might even tend to increase the surplus. The effect in other countries of such a disposal program sustained or

recognized by national legislation is also to be considered. That is, we do not know in advance what the dangers might be. It is not actually a price-fixing measure, but, like the tariff, it establishes or fixes the relation between domestic and foreign prices. In practice, however, it would stabilize receipts from sales, if it worked as its advocates expect, and probably would be popularly considered as a price-fixing mechanism.

It is probably as defensible theoretically to establish or regulate prices on exports as on imports; agriculture is as much entitled to encouragement and protection as is industry; but it would seem to be better statesmanship to correct existing errors, even if of long standing, before we engage in new and dubious experiments. Our present tariff organization is essentially an import corporation, the corporation being the government itself. Tariff for revenue is one thing and tariff for the protection of young and experimental industries is another thing; but tariff that results in price-control is a different breed. It becomes a form of indirect subsidy and in some cases is practically an embargo. We are so accustomed to the inequities of tariff that we are no longer shocked by them. Even so, I do not see how a change in tariff regulations could have prevented our present agricultural distress. Nor is it clear that a radical partisan subversion of

the tariff, with its upsetting of industrial conditions, would of itself bring the general parity that the farmers rightly seek; but a non-political considerate reconstruction of it should be a process in the redirecting of the public temper.

The organization of society is such that the town-worker is customarily able to maintain a wage apparently not relatively justified by his production or output or by his contribution to welfare. More fundamental producers contribute to the maintenance of this standard. Whatever may be one's personal opinion on the export controversy, or whether those engaged in it foresee the ultimate consequences of the particular measure before the country, we probably have here the beginning of an underlying surge of public opinion that will make itself felt in the forthcoming disclosures of the relations of agriculture to industry.

It is difficult to make the orthodox financier see the merits of the export proposal. I am not convinced that all the orthodox commercial theory is sound. It is to be remembered that we are living under an industrial and factory economy, and the measure of its efficiency is its earnings. We talk convincingly about a law of supply-and-demand, and yet much of our practice is to prevent its operation. All the current industrial devices to control output and trade may be used in violation of it, as the lock-

out, the shut-down, the strike, the hoarding and withhholding of supplies, the cornering of the market, the maintenance of so many factories or enterprises that they can work only part time, the combinations in restraint of trade. We raise prices ostensibly on the law of supply-and-demand, whereas we may be only taking advantage of demand. We are more likely to found our practice on either supply or demand (suiting our purpose), than to balance the two. If supply-and-demand were allowed really to operate, much of our merchandizing practice would collapse. A commercial system that develops these conditions and practices, that calls on government for discriminatory and protective legislation to bolster it, and that produces warring camps, should be careful not to arrogate to itself too much pride of opinion.

The prevailing theory of commerce is also strong in the accent on the necessity of competition; yet much of the current tendency is the elimination of competition between units and the controlling of the situation. The real human competition is between many small and wholly independent units, without commercial agreements among them; this is best illustrated, on a large base, in the millions of farms. The effort to apply the current commercial philosophy to the farm situation is therefore largely misdirected.

It is not unlikely that we shall reach the saturation-point of massed industry, and come in sight of a system that values personal units, segregation of industry, and measures its results in individual contentment and aspiration. These remarks are introduced here specially to uncover the fact that because a proposal arouses the opposition of current commercial opinion it is not necessarily unsound.



In the United States in 1926, 1927 and 1928, "the surplus" is a major question of policy, but the privilege of a farmer to produce bountiful crops remains ever the same the world around. He should be able to exercise this privilege without contributing to a continuously dangerous surplus.



IX

Estimate

I grieve for the hardships that many farm people are obliged to endure in times of deflation, through no fault of their own; but to agriculture the present condition should be a purifying process and I trust that to legislation it will be clarifying. In such periods the speculative elements are forced out of the country, land returns to its farming value, and things strike bottom. It is then a good time to begin careful efforts in reconstruction.

At this point, therefore, I may give a brief estimate, as I see it, of some of the main features in the present rural situation. This will be recognized as something like a review or summary of the discussions on preceding pages; the double emphasis may indicate the importance I attach to some of the judgments.

Depressing situations do not last. Nature brings relief in time, but many persons suffer distressingly in the long course of readjustment. Many farmers are even now doing well. Many others are merely holding their own; some of these persons are young men of vision and good preparation who are undergoing a course of discipline and training, saying little; after a

time some of the energy of these younger persons will be released, as conditions improve, and their neighbors will call them out for advice and service: these persons, I hope, will be the leaders of the near future.

Certainly we require a new type of leader or exemplar in many parts of the open country. We have given relatively too much attention to training for leadership, as if leadership were itself a profession; we incline to indulge too much in philosophy and make too little direct inquiry of farmers themselves; we place more dependence on mere technical expertness than on qualities of the heart. We need training for farming and common good citizenship and the quickening of spiritual personality: in the end the people will find their leaders, and both people and leaders will be the better for the discovery.

The past generation was specially interested in the increase of production in agriculture. The present epoch is interested particularly in the disposal of the production. Yet, in any case, the human values remain. Speaking largely for the generation now passing from the scene, I made the following statements in my little book of several years ago called "Ground-Levels in Democracy," and I think that the observations are still pertinent even if needing slight modification:

"The historian will discover this present seg-

ment of time to have been remarkable for its attainments with the products in agriculture. It is an epoch of wonderful horses, record-breaking cows, magnificent bulls, impeccable fowls; an epoch of marvelous fruits of the land, and of vast projects of reclamation. But the temper of the time begins to run out to the human factors, to the worth of the people in all the localities, to the little movements here and there that arise like springs in a fertile field. We just begin to glimpse something beyond us, as yet undefined; and presently our thought will begin to run backward to discover who were the men far in the generations behind us who saw something of this field and what they said about it, and what have been the rills of influence that have made the present current. We shall look forward for leaders, and shall discover that although we have had major prophets, not yet have we had a national figure."



Capable persons on good farms should be saved as farmers. We need them as producers and as men and women, more even for the latter than for the former. Those persons not adapted to farming will gradually find other occupation. Poor and inaccessible land should be disoccupied. We may need some of these lands for farming in some other time but not

now (and possibly less than we have supposed), and when we need them we should be able to settle them on a much better basis than at present. In the meantime let us hope that we shall be learning something; and we shall find it better to increase the yield on good and accessible lands before we try to reoccupy the fortuneless ones.

To utilize these remote and infertile lands we must have state policies toward that end and competent systems of constructive forestry in all regions in which forest-growing is possible. It is even better that such lands go gradually back to nature than that lives should be wrecked on them, for the conditions have vastly changed since our fathers were boys. I hesitate to introduce this subject again, so much have I repeated it through so many years and I have approached it in earlier pages under this cover, but here is an outstanding problem in agriculture and rural life in great parts of North America. The barest beginnings are making here and there to purchase the back lands as the occupants are willing to sell, and to utilize them as public holdings. In time we shall be expending millions in this work and consider it a good investment. Here is a positively fundamental civic, political and social reconstruction, more of a background problem than even hard roads, and statesmanship must recognize it.

We do not need to devote all these poor and remote lands to forestry. In this fortunate land, at least, the horse-and-buggy days are gone forever and we shall go far away for our playgrounds, resorts and preserves. City parks, ever so good, will not be sufficient. We shall transport people for a day at a time to county and state parks miles in the open country. As these reserves must be ample in area, so must we be careful not to establish them on potential agricultural lands, for these lands we shall need for other uses. The reserves are for solitude and inspiration as well as for the customary forms of recreation. They should not savor of the market-place nor even too much of organized "activities." We should not overdo the development of them or make all the area too easy of exploration; something real should be left to the imagination, something to stimulate effort on the part of visitors; certainly they should not encourage the prevailing listlessness.

Under the present laissez-faire the back lands are gradually losing inhabitants. The building of hard roads through the valleys and on main thoroughfares disadvantages the remote areas by comparison. Taxes are also high in the regions of poor farming, for roads and schools and other requisites must be maintained on a falling assessment. Recently I visited a hill country of poor land where the rate of taxation

on the real valuation is about 3½ per cent; in the valleys near by it is 1¾ per cent. The wish to be in touch, to see the world go by, to have some of the amenities, are gravitational forces toward good lands and thoroughfares. It would seem to be the part of government to acknowledge these tendencies, to lessen the hardships in them, to provide a constructive utilization of the lands, to make the movements count toward civic results.

Unfortunately, a continued depressed period in agriculture does not result in vacating only the infertile and remote lands. Farmers carrying heavy mortgages or other indebtedness may not be able to meet their obligations, even though they occupy excellent land. Current devices to make borrowing easy may encourage running disastrously into debt. Good land therefore passes to other and often to incompetent hands and may cease to yield a worthy social result either in produce or in persons. It may be taken up by foreign elements, with a very different scale of living. The gradual pressure of hard conditions may even result in the replacement of good farm families by subnormal types, with a low morale and a consequent injury to land that ought to be kept in prime condition for the good of country and city alike. In such periods, also, many persons are tied to farms who by inclination may not belong there, not being able to liquidate their

holdings. Land does not profit either by unwilling or unrewarded occupancy; it is not conserved by those playing a losing game.

Many good persons will object to these statements because they have been taught that we are near the end of new farming land and that even the poorer disadvantaged lands are at present needed for crop-production. But not even in the United States are we near the limit of farming land. Because we have run over the West, have homesteaded and named streams and towns and made maps covered with names, we conclude that the lands are all utilized; nothing could be further from the fact. Small part of the potential farm land of the earth is yet effectively utilized. Long ago I pointed out that some of the reserve lands of the future, in the United States, will be in the older parts of the country,—lands once taken up but for the present not in cultivation, and vast areas never have been tilled or in any way effectively utilized. We are not in sight of a farm-land famine. We do not need, in the present situation, to bring great areas of new land into cultivation.

We have a fair vision of what a highly developed rural society should be, but in pitifully few places has it reached the stage of excellence

we should be capable of maintaining. The bare statement of the case shows that something is wrong.

We shall have indeed a different civic body when these rural districts really come into their own. We are providing the folk with the training. The education, extensional and otherwise, is likely to be ahead of the situation. The folk should now have income enough to make it completely effective for themselves and for society. The very education we are giving the youth demands a better type of living; and yet many good people still wonder why so many of the college boys do not go back to the old farms.

The disparities of policy and public attitude and inequitable status affecting agriculture lie mostly in these directions: in disadvantages as to church, school, medical and nursing service; in taxation; in the field of transportation and distribution; in regulation or control of fortuitous over-production in world staples; in the inability of the farmer to exercise any important influence on the selling-price of staple products; in marketing, including holding and disposal of surplusage; need of financing of agricultural operations under public safeguards or regulation; tariff; labor supply; habit of regarding agriculture only as a business, to be measured in terms of trade; general domination of policies and affairs for corporate and indus-

trial interests and special advantages that accrue to these interests by legislation.

That is, the real difficulty lies in the organization of society itself, to long-accustomed ways of thinking. The old adjustments have broken down and passed away. The present industrial domination of affairs does not allow the full development of agriculture, and agriculture cannot change itself quickly to meet temporary conditions. Perhaps, on the commercial side, an official federal body with power to watch conditions and to adjust inequalities might be of service.

The real remedy is a slow, conscious process of adjustment and betterment by all the forces of town and country, political, social, religious, fiscal; the requirement is a better statecraft.

The fundamental concept for the people to get into their heads is the fact that they share with the farmers themselves the responsibility for the maintenance of the producing-power of the land. We need a different kind of teaching. Even if our present conceptions of fertility and of soil depletion undergo radical change, it will remain the obligation of the farmer to protect the ground. Every major disadvantage under which the farmer labors and which is beyond his power as a farmer to overcome or correct, is likely to reflect itself in lessened productivity. The permanent wealth of society is in the soil. If this obligation is once under-

stood and accepted, all the other betterments follow as a matter of course.

A basic deficiency in agriculture is the fact that in the general staples the farmer cannot set the prices for his produce to meet the expense of production, and therefore cannot obtain the full natural results from his cost-accounting; at the same time he buys against a market in which an opposite condition largely prevails. He cannot lower the price in order to move a surplus. It is true, of course, that the manufacturer cannot always make prices to cover his costs, but he is much nearer the problem than is the farmer and he is able to shift or modify his practice or even to close his shop; the farm keeps on even at a loss. This situation is not to be adjusted alone by the making of laws, but a working understanding of it on the part of public leadership would do much to improve the condition; offsets may be found; it is a limitation the farmer cannot correct by himself. All these disparities are not so much reasons for complaint as for study and reconstruction. The balance between land and industry has not yet been struck.

The backwardness of many rural districts is commonly laid to lack of ability of the farmers. There are of course incompetent men on the

farms; there are marginal and decadent communities; in some regions the inhabitants are remainders of a former virile population; yet the public little recognizes the farmer's place in nature and does not grasp the fact that the limits within which he can shift and modify his occupation are really very small. I once put this situation into a formula (What is Democracy?, 96) and need go no further here than merely to call attention to it in order to say that the farm is not a factory even in spite of much current discussion to the contrary.

If agriculture needs a real regeneration, must it come about through a change of attitude and a higher competency on the part of the farmer himself, or must it arise by means of external agencies expressed in governmental aid and marketing development?

Assuredly the first help is in the farmer himself, not in his organizations or his political influence nor even in "the government." This the farmer recognizes. Farming has not yet fully utilized its own resources or the knowledge now available. Some farms are of such a nature that prosperity is impossible. Special favors in legislation are not needed. Trade conditions should be as even-handed to him as to others, and take into account his peculiar situation. The fair chance is to be developed by society as represented in fiscal and govern-

mental systems and in public recognition of the merits of the situation. We are here in the realm of policies that are formed by the way in which the people think about these subjects. These adjustments, as I have said, will come slowly. We have centuries of established trade and custom to overcome. It is difficult for us to get away from the peasant-idea in farming, so long have the affairs of men been adjusted to that relationship. We are wont to think, also, that recurring agricultural calamities are inevitable as we once thought (in the United States) that panics are unavoidable. Special legislative remedies for particular disparities are possible, but the part for legislation to play in the long run is simply this: Whenever any policy or piece of welfare legislation is under consideration we should make a real effort to determine *what effect it will have on the occupation, business and general well-being of the farming people, to the end that the keepership of the earth may be properly maintained.* What would be the consequences if a statement of this purport were to constitute the sole plank on "agriculture" in a party platform? Some such formula as the above I have propounded many times. No one apparently seems to think the formula of importance, so there is no harm in repeating it.

In the meantime, we are training the coming

generations of farmers in a better way. To be sure, we have only touched the borders of the sciences in their relation to agriculture, but we are setting the mind into new and truer ways of appraisal. The need of long-continued fundamental research is a real justification for large appropriations to the agricultural institutions; the educational results to the people at large will follow as a matter of course.

Here I may be allowed to quote again from my little book of 1916, Ground-Levels in Democracy: "The agricultural experiment stations are factors of tremendous significance to any self-governing people. The farmers, who comprise the bottom factor in any democracy, have been among the most prejudiced of men. With them tradition has challenged fact.

"Other occupations may come and go, schemes of politics and social revolutions may pass, but the farmer is on the land forever. Slowly but certainly we are placing before him a new way of approach to the problems of life, an inspiring and authoritative example in the conquest of his conditions. At first perhaps rebellious, then tolerant, then curious, then cautious, he now accepts the new way and begins to demand exact reasons for everything he does.

"Gently this attitude will work itself out in ethics, in education, in poltics, in local lead-

ership, as well as in agriculture and in commerce. Our experiment stations are laying the very foundations of democracy."

I am told that in the present state of human affairs we cannot depend on a rationalistic attitude; this is only another way of saying that we are not yet competent to govern ourselves; and as long as we are not competent we shall of course have to bear with inequalities and hardships. Of course, also, we are not to expect an ideal society, for ideals are naturally always ahead of us; we need not stand on the corner waiting for Utopia to come along; but it would be worth something if our fundamental welfare were always in mind when the structure of the civic body is undergoing change.

The first requisite toward the acquirement of any such attitude as this is to outgrow the political or partisan point of view and judgment of events. We must learn to use facts on their merits, in a scientific rather than a political temper. In most cases we have facts enough to enable us greatly to improve the policies that adversely affect agricultural welfare; the problem is to learn how to organize and utilize them.

Just now we are placing great reliance on

organizations to correct the difficulties in agriculture. These will help as far as they provide us with facts and reflect the welfare of the rural people. The danger is that they will try to do too much and that they will become the exponents of partisan programs and reflect the ambitions of individuals, and that they will fall into lobbyism. They are likely to run away with us or with themselves, and the more effective they are as pieces of machinery the greater is the danger. Chambers of commerce, for example, begin to exercise the functions of government, perhaps because government is not effective; but they may not represent the people. It is difficult to keep internal politics out of any organizational effort. The policies that fundamentally affect agriculture are not localized in the corn-belt or cotton-belt or wheat-belt or other circuit, and one region cannot run away with another.

Coöperative marketing organizations should accomplish great good in their field and the subject is awaiting constructive remedy; but they are not the type of organization to speak for country life and they will not remain near enough the people or carry the sympathetic relationship to a man's need for personal production. Agriculture cannot be represented by disposal organizations, although it may be much aided by them.

The ills of the open country cannot be cured

by the current fashion of efficiency. I am not thinking here of good organization of hours and forces, that is, administration of one's time; but there are those who would try to regulate farm labor on the basis of factory or shop work. The practice of modern arbitrary efficiency is the effort to meet the regularity and economy of the machine. The good machine makes no false motions, no mistakes, loses no time. It sets a uniform and invariable standard. Machines control the processes in a factory. They do not similarly control the processes on a farm and never can do so. There is no disputing the value of manual efficiency and intellectual celerity anywhere, but in farming the man is by himself and is his own overseer. Fortunately, farming does not need to raise the question as to how far one may be trained in efficiency and not lose oneself; in this series of occupations spontaneity is or ought to be the guiding force.

Keeping time with a machine or a formal factory routine (which of course is now necessary) takes the personality out of labor, and it constitutes a good reason for the limiting of the hours of the day's work. The idea of mechanical efficiency has so far invaded our lives that many persons would introduce it into the home and even into play; yet our very need in a machine age is to encourage informality and animation, that is, personality,

rather than to make a person an automaton or mechanical toy. The mechanical efficiency systems and excessive organization and subordination of personality are undoubtedly taking away the "gimp," initiative, and eagerness for work: observe the faces, carriage and expression of those strongly under such influences; yet earnestness for labor is one of the world's best enthusiasms.

It is well to get away now and then from the seemingly inexorable. Particularly should we not try to carry the shop efficiency over into the home. In the ordinary relations of life it is not desirable to economize motions or even seconds. Was it not a visitor from Japan who observed, when his host was to rush upstairs from the subway local to the express train to save two minutes, "Yes; and what shall we do with the two minutes?"

If we are merely mechanically efficient we may not have sufficient exercise for vivacity or bodily health.

Farming is by no means bankrupt or decadent, nor are the present particular disabilities permanent or universal. They are specially manifest in regions of new or unstabilized settlement and in areas of non-diversified and ineffective farming. Certain kinds of farming now thrive specially well, for consumers pay

handsomely for luxuries and for fancy brands. I know a farmer who, twenty years ago, was devoting a large farm to alfalfa, potatoes, Holstein cattle and certified milk. Labor costs increased, farm help became listless and inefficient, market conditions changed radically. Now he raises Persian lambs, silver foxes, a special breed of dogs, and fancy fowls. "Is it not strange," he asks me, "that a yearly loss on staple food products the people need can be changed into a profit by raising the things that people do not need?" This is the comfortable old doctrine of expensive luxuries purchased by the savings on cheap food, but which we must outgrow.

Perhaps the time has passed for the easy payment of a farm taken without capital from the wilderness; the pioneering stage has mostly lapsed; working investment is now required to make the enterprise go; a farm now-a-days raises certain products for cash sale, whereas in the old days it grew the supplies to maintain the family or obtained the needed ones by means of ready barter. There is bound to be hardship, perhaps in increasing volume, for persons not adapted to farming or who are poorly placed, but the inevitable process of selection is in progress and the well-equipped man should find his opportunity better in the future than now. The subjective incomes should be increasingly greater as the mind is

opened by better education and a sounder ambition.

Agriculture has fallen so much, in the public discussions, into mere commercial valuations and many of the regions have been so void of inspired leaders, that we are now direfully in need of a spiritual awakening. Here lies primary need, in my estimation, of the open country. We make the tremendous error of supposing that the plight of the farmer is merely necessitous.

We live in a time of competition in trade and in the acquirement of goods as well as in ambition and social "position", as if happiness depended on accumulation. May we not spread the hope that farming will be one of the occupations relatively free from these rivalries?

We are often asked wherewith we shall measure rural welfare. The measures are commonly sought in some form of accounting, preferably that lends itself to expression in figures; this appears to be the only form that means much to the current mind; we now habitually postulate in terms of groups and unions and "society" and relationships, and try to express ourselves in footings, percentages and averages. We lose ourselves in suppositions. Yet welfare is personal, not relative; it is not measurable by means of arbitrary or numerical formulas.

Statistics and graphs are always impersonal; they cover numbers and ranges of people, and individual experience and opinion disappear. The only measure of rural welfare is the satisfaction that the members of the farm family derive from the occupation and the situation; and the only way to discover this satisfaction is to ask the persons; this is also the scientific way. The answers to such inquiry may vary widely with individuals and may be colored by personality; so does all biological inquiry yield varying results if it is genuine: it is the responsibility of the inquirer to determine what the observations signify.

When numerical and arbitrary measures fail, as fail they must, the subjective and idealistic values remain; if these values are not developed, all the objective and money profits are of little avail. The external status is an unreliable index of intrinsic welfare. The quality of rural population is more important than the quantity of its produce.

Farming is "as old as the hills". Through untold centuries the people have spread over the earth and have settled themselves on the land and have become adapted to their surroundings much as have the animals and plants.

Their backgrounds and their opinions have centuries in them. These conditions and experiences cannot be understood alone by means of any science that may be developed in the present hour. This world-wide settlement on land through the long centuries now meets the impact of industrial and commercial conditions, and inharmonies result; but the study of these industrial and commercial affairs does not disclose the native adaptations and the ageless heredities. I do not look for the settlement of all our rural difficulties in the present generation. Perhaps some of these difficulties are tinctured with resistances we do not yet understand. We need positive studies in the Ecology of Farming, pursued with the same scientific earnestness that underlies the best investigations in other ecological fields.

The greatest disaster would be a settled habit of complaint on the part of the farmer. I fear that some of our difficulties are states of mind. Dissatisfactions are hard to cure when they reach the heart. Pride in the occupation, and courage, are first requisites. If we have bred professional dissatisfiers in other ranges, we must not do it in agriculture. We must be ready to eliminate the agitator.

We are against the problem of developing a sufficient rural society, with its peculiar culture. This problem is part of the great work of nation-building, in which plans for human hap-

piness are more important than projects for the dissemination of wealth.

I like to think that in this western world we are to develop a new type of farmer, a small capitalist who himself works his land, free from the restraints and traditions of peasantry, a wholesome home-maker, a self-acting generous partaker in society, a sympathetic counseler with nature, and a conscious keeper of the land for his fellow men. We shall gradually approach the population problems of older lands, but I trust we shall not acquire their limitations to human opportunity and personal expression. I do not fear a drift toward peasantry. We shall provide these people with a training superior to a labor-union system, and, let us hope, an outlook far more worth while than the current commercial and advertising valuation of life.

I fear we are losing something of our idealism, sacrificing it to expertness; if we lose it, we lose all; for idealism is a condition of initiative, enterprise, the long look ahead. Cleverness and the ledger do not develop vision.

In daily contact with natural objects, set against the best background the earth affords, the farming people should be in the happiest position of any great range of the population.

This has been the hope of poets and prophets in all the ages. Yet we are still unable to realize this position and to utilize the natural contact. There is here a latitude of accomplishment we have yet hardly forecast, lying far beyond our present restricted vision, outrunning all our small forebodings and pessimism.

To this end we need a new consecration. It should be essentially religious, in the best and divinest sense. We must remove the blinders and let the whole creation come into the soul.

I have long hoped that one great element in society might retain its nativity and base its contribution on a moral spiritual effort, holding mankind close to the verities of the earth, being attracted little by the glitter of social meteors and comets, in simpleness, cleanness, directness, with due sense of the responsibility involved in living; and I have desired that this element should be the direct imaginative ascent from the patriarchs and prophets of the strong young days. The man should control his own destiny.

PART II

THE INCOMES

X

The Backgrounds

Twice in the year the spell of the woods and streams comes over one,—once in the spring when the element of release is vibrant, and again in the autumn when the housing and harvesting instinct is dominant. In the spring one goes for flowers or balmy air, and for the soft and tender reactions; in the autumn one goes for nuts and fruits and for the crisp exercise of tang and strength. These are the experiences of personal uplift, when restraints are broken and one likes to wander. Another season of desire for release is in summer, but at that period whole families go to lakes and mountains and shores and open spaces; colonies are formed for the time; the heat and weariness of the city and of hot interior valleys are left behind; it is a vacation impulse.

But whatever the impulse, it is testimony to the fact that forests, fields, hills, meadows, thickets, marshes, beaches and streams still mean much to human beings. In fact, it is surprising how great is the proportion of men and women who live always against these native backgrounds and who would live nowhere else. It is surprising, also, how much

in sentiment and in point of view these persons contribute to modern life.

Yet dwellers in the cities are likely to feel that the corporate, organized and political affairs determine the course of whatever is worth while in society. The city, in a generic sense, is indeed dominant in current thought, and its contribution to human welfare is beyond all comment. The ancient sources are not to be forgotten, however. The rain means something to humankind beyond better crops, greater stream-flow, the cooling of the atmosphere and the laying of dust. Rocks mean more than building materials. Trees mean more than timber, more even than shade and refreshment. The animals that man has domesticated and befriended mean more than meat and milk and clothing. The farm folk far away from cities and towns mean much more than so many people added to population, much more even than the source of indispensable supplies for these cities and towns.

Persons in the congregated centers need always to be reminded of the dispersed and scattered places, and to have them freshly evaluated in terms of sentiments, motives, and outlooks. We do not measure them completely and perhaps not even properly by means of trade. There are many reasons that do not appear in the public prints, or even when they appear are lost in the whirl of

events. It is by no means certain that congestion of human beings will long remain the dominant note in civilization. Perhaps we have not yet properly apprehended the most permanent and invariable attributes in our occupancy of the Earth. Nature is still the background of our activities.

XI

The Farmsteads

Along the country highways are signs of approaching winter quite aside from the changing season. The signs are apparent in the housing activities, the gathering of supplies of firewood and vegetables and fruit, the battening of windy buildings, and in some regions the installing of double windows and the banking of the house. Piles of pumpkins are now and then in evidence. In the Eastern country cornstalks are being drawn to the barn. Ditches are opened for the winter rains and thaws. Brush is collected and burned. Approaches are put in order. If the autumn is open, the house or outbuildings may be painted. Garden lands are sometimes plowed to be in readiness for the first permission of spring. Horses are in use in much of this work, for the tractor is not available in the upkeep about residence and barn, and animal power is still the stand-by.

There is deep significance to these minor activities, because they indicate a home. In all the great changes in country life and in farming, the home remains and is essentially the same as in other years; this is the greatest and most important fact in agriculture. It out-

weighs the quantities of things, the turnovers and the activities of produce markets. The home is still part of the farm, rearing new generations in the very midst of the realities of life, without make-believe, stage-play, patronage, advertising, go-betweens, or superfluities. It is a twelve-month institution, seemingly as native and unremovable as land and trees and ceaseless brooks. It contributes taxes rather than rent.

Any estimate of agriculture that misses this situation is defective and of little avail, however much it may satisfy the daily appetite for quotations and statistics. The good single-family farm in the real open country (not in the environs of cities and towns) is one of our greatest social assets, and happily it is also grounded in good economy. If we need the supplies, we need also these families.

XII

The Uplands

Men are short of stature and the hills are high. The crests of hills are against the blue, and their consorts are the clouds. Their voices are the cosmic winds. There is mystery in the hills because we do not know what devious paths are in them, what ranges unexplored, what denizens of beasts and birds, what tragedies may be covered by the lonely night. Most men never really walk the hills; they see them only from afar; but the mind may still be lifted above the levels of its own horizon.

Travelers from the vast prairies are likely to appraise the hills as wilderness and waste, incapable of producing crops, unadapted to the machinery of modern tillage. But the Earth is not all for provender, nor is its value to be reckoned in its yields. The uplands have voices far above the market-places. From their heights the ambitions of men dwarf into their proper proportions, and the soul, if quick and free, for once looks outward beyond itself. The panorama of the landscape sweeps a man into the eternities and humbles him before the beauty and the majesty of works that rise beyond his power.

Now men are taught to fly. They will see the hills as gentle undulations beneath the soaring car. Will they then think of them as mere incidents, as only amusing patterns on a conquered earth? This exigency we are now to meet, and the issue may be greater than the success of aviation; for the attitude of mind is more important than the conquest of the air.

Yet we know that we must perforce abide on the solid ground; we will be only passengers among the clouds. Verily the hills will hold their mysteries to men, their passing sun and shade will weave the stuff of dreams. Sad would be the day were there no objects higher than a man.

XIII

November: June

The frost is here again. It has blasted the tomato vines and beans; the cucumber shoots are limp with blackened withered leaves; the stately rows of sugar corn rustle dryly in the wind; the last cosmos and dahlia are gone, and the proud bushes that bore the flaring blooms are broken and dead; the China asters and the marigold are in ruins.

So has the garden gone; the hopes of June with the achievements of August and September are passed again into the burdened years. A tinge of sadness is in the crisp autumn air, the low sun is only mildly warm at noon, and twilight creeps on before the day's work is done. Here is the wreck of the year; all the energies that burst in April are spent, the leaves loose their hold in a million appointed places and fall aimlessly into unassorted heaps. One would think that defeat and death are everywhere. The deadness of the winter night is even yet marching on the landscape. It is accounted a sad and ineffective ending for the brilliant promises of May.

A squirrel is harvesting the fallen nuts, to store them against the needs of winter; he is

alert and quick, and apparently has neither fear nor dread. The hens go in and out contentedly. Cattle are in peace on distant fields. Crows flap out and away at dawn and back again at night as they flew to feeding-grounds in summer. The pinks that spiced the air in May and June are making bright aspiring shoots from the bottoms of their grassy clumps: another May is coming. Young hollyhocks with great bold leaves are along the margins: another July is in their roots. Foxgloves, snapdragons, and campanulas are sprouting at the base in sheer anticipation. Fresh tufts have sprung where the Madonna lilies held their stately bloom when June was passing to July. Great buds are on the crowns of the Christmas rose, to give bloom again before St. Patrick's Day, and the rhubarb crowns are ready. The twigs of trees from which the dead leaves fell are heavy with great buds that have harvested the vigor of summer and that will burst in leaf and bloom when the swallows come again. Men are plowing in the fields, to make ready for a new earth. Fences are building, old accumulations of worn-out things are burning in their heaps, highways are receiving the final betterments, crops are in the harvest. Men and pinks and squirrels are instinct with ancient faith.

It has been a brilliant year, when beast and tree and men have ridden one more journey around the sun and have come back with a

harvest. The holy harvest is in the season's brood, the showers of fallen golden leaves, the preparation for another May, the year's accomplishment and the ripened soul. The energies of June are garnered in November.

XIV

Soil

They would have us believe that mechanical power will be so abundantly distributed and so pleasantly adjusted that the farmer may keep his hands in his pockets and not even drive a horse; for all the tillage will be accomplished by oversight rather than by labor. It is said by others that in some remote future we may cease entirely to till the soil in the current sense and raise food and other supplies from improved kinds of trees and shrubs that require planting only once in a generation or two and no attention of tillage in the meantime. It is said, also, that we shall raise plants in water of lakes and swamps and thus escape the tillage. Others, again, will have us cease eating and take our food in doses from a test-tube or other chemical contrivance or in capsules; and still others will practice some kind of subtlety with sunshine and nitrogen and derive our manna from the atmosphere.

It is surprising to what painful theories men will consign themselves in the hope of escaping labor; and it is the more amazing when the labor is altogether so satisfying as the tilling of the land. There may be an overplus of

anything, but I never knew a farmer or a gardener who did not like to work in the soil; or if there is such a one, then he is not a farmer or a gardener.

To break the land is the first rousing ambition of spring. Seed-bags and corn-cribs and bins of potatoes all wait for spring and the planting: that is their destiny; or if some of the number fall to the merciless hap of the cook then is their misfortune complete and hopeless. For tillage is not alone the opening and the stirring of the soil: it is the beginning and the nurture of new generations. It is a mighty power the soil-tiller holds, from bare earth or in place of vagabondish weeds to produce cotton and sugar-cane and chrysanthemums.

Yet the manual tillage is itself an entertainment. One feels that things are let loose when the land is plowed and dragged. Slumbering powers are awakened. Rains are invited. The night and the morning contribute to the process. The sun enters in. The air invades the pores. The multitudes of mighty living things so small we cannot see them are somehow vivified and set to work.

Beside all this, it is a sensation to hear the break and crackle of the furrow, to catch the loosened odor that comes out of the ground, to see the stubble and weeds fall under, to feel the exhalation of buried moisture newly released. It is all a pleasant contrast from hard

roads and particularly from newly swept pavements, from barn floors, and fences and roofs and all the things that men proudly contrive. We get back, even if for a short time, to men in olden time, to prairies, to forests newly cleared. We are out by brooks and nesting birds, and windy bloom, and soaring hawks, and horizons bounding real landscapes. What if there were no brooks and nesting birds, no wind-blown bloom and soaring wings, no horizons resting on the hills? Ah well! and well!

Very likely it is true that we shall find new sources of energy and of food; this is to be expected, and this is probably the answer in part to those who foresee starvation ahead of us; but in our time, at least, we may safely count on tilling the soil; and even if beyond our present dreams we find the new sources, we shall probably need the soil in the bargain to satisfy the desires if not the actual needs of the race; and perhaps, also, men will be recompensed for tilling the soil in the very joy of tilling it, seeing that men must always have occupation; and in these natural kinds of occupation we shall ever find new satisfactions as knowledge accumulates and as appreciation grows, for the discovery of the nature of the soil is not yet complete.

A soil becomes personal to a man. The longer he works it the more it means to him and the

greater should be its response. It never grows old to him. Memories become imbedded in it, and it expresses the generations of men. There is a flair for new land, and yet it is on the old soils that a permanent agriculture must rest.



In my youth we knew that we knew all about the soil, or as much as farmers need to know. It was then, under the teaching of Liebig and the early explorers, a reservoir of chemicals. Then came the great subject of "soil physics," and a new conception of the soil was placed before us. We began to talk about the soil particle, and structure and texture. Then came the biology of it, with the discovery and apprehension of the microörganic life therein, and we visioned a living soil. Now we are uncovering the complex subject of colloid matter in the soil. Acidity and alkalinity have become realities in practice. Probably in no field of knowledge touching farming has there been such a wealth of new information to stimulate interest in such a common subject. There are professorships in soils; it was only a score of years ago that the word began to find itself in such titles; and in 1927 the United States has had the privilege of entertaining an International Congress of Soil Science. "Soils" has come to be a department of knowledge.

In these days of tractors and gang-plows and all the curious implements, we little realize how recent is the idea of soil tillage by any other means than human muscle. It is only two centuries ago that Jethro Tull began to develop his "Horse-hoeing husbandry" and to explain the reasons for tillage; and even in my youth the application of other power to the land was not within our dreams. Yet in spite of all this advancement, and partly because of it, tillage becomes ever more significant, and the man cannot separate himself from the soil.

The practice of tillage is no longer the mere stirring of the soil, for the careful tiller must know what he is doing. The fertilizing of land is not now merely a process in subtraction and addition. Drainage has new reasons. If the hoeman and the plowman are alive to the new knowledge they will find recuperation for the spirit; and St. Paul wrote to Timothy that "the husbandman that laboureth must be the first partaker of the fruits."

It is not to be supposed that we are even yet in sight of the end of it. The next generation may have a very different conception of the supply of soil nitrogen and of fertility in general. The inexorable subject of soil exhaustion even now takes on a changing form of discussion, although the necessity of safeguarding fertility is as much a moral and social problem as ever. There are reasons for supposing that

we shall discover electrical phenomena of great importance in relation to soil fertility.

As far as authoritative science is concerned, tillage takes on constantly a new significance; and thereby it is elevated above drudgery into the realm of rational procedure. The importance of tillage as an operation in the affairs of men is ahead of us rather than behind us.

We shall welcome every new method and source of food supply. Some day we may utilize the ponds and swamps without necessarily draining and tilling them: with others, I have long recommended it. We shall have synthetic foods, but the importance of them to the major problems of existence is yet at least visionary. But we shall also keep the plow and the harrow in condition, and the cultivator and hoe, and shall find increasing use for them and more joy in applying them. With the increase of learning, we find the common objects and the usual relations to have unsuspected meanings; the riches of life are constantly and repeatedly augmented.

Thin like the skin of an apple, the soil layer of the earth has been formed through countless ages of weathering and disintegration and the accumulation of organic remains. The history of the planet is recorded in it. Whatever may be at the center of the Earth, we know that this thin exterior supports the life of the planet, and it is the arena on which the drama

of civilization is acted. The plants and animals cease to live and their remains go back to the earth from which they came,—to the soil beneath and the air above, expressing the union of the physical elements of life. All we know of life and death and bold activity are conditioned on the ground and to it we ourselves return, to the "dust" of the Scripture, a word without special connotation and that suggests the universality of the process.

Only once have the King James translators rendered a term into the agricultural word "soil," wherein was planted the vine of Ezekiel's riddle, "that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine." To us the word suggests fertility, yields, occupations, industries, the foothold of all things. It suggests many tools of strength and great simplicity, not less artistic because so common. The staff, the wheel, the easel and many other tools and contrivances appear in artistic interpretations; if good line and proportion, simplicity, direct adaptation to use, appropriate materials, are elements of art, then the hoe, the rake, and the modern plow are abundantly qualified. It would be much loss to the imaginative inheritance of men if the sense of tillage tools were eliminated.

The Harvest

We admire all work that is well executed. It may be a bridge spanning a river, a monument, a smooth-running machine, a well-woven fabric. I trust we are quick also to admire a well-prepared field ready for the seeding: the boundaries are definite and clean; the contours are pleasing; the colors exist nowhere else; the plowing is straight and uniform; the surface preparation leaves a finish suggesting good intention and prosperity; the area is abundant with promise; and if you yourself fitted the field you have a memory of weather, of clouds adrift, of birds and perhaps of little quadrupeds, insects, cattle on greensward, distant barns, dusty wind, tools with no superfluities, the sound of good tilth, little runnels for the rain, stones and perhaps of rock, roots seeking food, trees and blossoms, last year's dead leaves, earthy odors, and of satisfaction in an honest useful day's work.

XV

My Father's Hoe

Either side the clock in my workroom hangs a weapon.

On one side is a fearsome musket that one of my ancestors is said to have captured in the War of the American Revolution. On the stock is crudely punctured the legend, "Samuel Mash, 1777." The bayonet and its leather sheath are still in place; I shudder to think what horrible traffic that blade may have executed. There is also the bullet-case, made of a block of wood into which two dozen holes are bored for the balls, three-fourths-inch wide and nearly three inches deep, enclosed in a crude leather case with a flap over the top and a pocket on the front. The old flint-lock and the priming-pan are yet in condition and the flint itself is in place. Empty of its contents and lacking the ramrod, this gun weighs eight and one-half pounds. It is four feet eleven inches long from muzzle to butt; it should have sent its bullet straight.

It was a hardy man that wielded this laborious firearm, in frontier days of crude equipment and of long journeys by sinking roads. Not many men could it have despatched, for it must

be loaded again by the muzzle after every single discharge; the loose powder was poured in, proper wads were inserted, the great home-made bullet placed, and all rammed home with the rod; the flint was adjusted; the pan was primed; and the weapon was ready for destruction, if it did not get wet or miss fire. But this weapon, and others like it, did their work well and we in the later day enjoy the fruits of their conquests; yet it has not taught us to abolish weapons for human slaughter. I like to think that the old gun hangs on my wall as a silent monitor of yet better days.

The other side the clock hangs my father's hoe. No other object is so closely wrought into my memories; my father left it hanging in the shed before the summons overtook him to leave the farm forever and I brought it home with me that I might know it every working day.

There is not merely a hoe. It is a symbol of a man's life. One of my persistent memories is the sound of that hoe in the early morning when the lids of sleep were so slowly slowly opening, and I knew that he was in the garden and all was well. Clish, clish, clish in an even rhythmic easy subdued cadence the hoe moved up and down the rows, never chopping, never hacking, never faltering, for my father was a hoeman as another man might be a welder or a wheelwright, taking pride in the skill of his handiwork. Very smooth and even the ground

was left, with a thin loose surface such as in the later sophisticated days we came to know as the earth-mulch. Six-foot-one he stood, and yet he scarcely stooped; with his right hand he grasped the handle near its end and always in the same way, with the thumb lengthwise on the wood, the four fingers clasped underneath, and the end of the stock not projecting from the back of the hand. Four inches from the end a hollow has been worn by the ball of the thumb, and underneath are furrows where the fingers grasped.

When the job was finished the hoe was cleaned and hung in its own place; no one else ever touched it. There was no proscription on it, but we would not think to use his hoe any more than to wear his shoes or his hat.

For how many years he used that hoe I do not know, but my memory does not go back to the time when it was not a part of him. In his later years, he felt that the old hoe was becoming too much worn and the handle too weak, so he hung it away and purchased another. This other hoe, much worn away, is also preserved, but it is relatively a modern affair and of a different breed.

Wonderful execution the old hoe has wrought. It would be difficult to estimate how many millions of young weeds have succumbed to it; the big weeds were pulled by hand, but the little growths fell beneath its steady even

march. It was a maxim with us that no weed should go to seed on the farm. And the hoe performed the acme of good and thorough surface tillage; this was its major contribution. The implement shows its service; the blade is worn to a thin plate with evenly rounded ends, three inches wide and six inches long; the handle at the shank is worn down to half its strength, and the furrows are deeply cut by grit and storm and time along the grain of the ashen wood.

It must have been good material in that handle and thimble and blade. He told me that it was one of the first hoes made at the State Prison at Jackson. He came into Michigan from the Green Mountains in 1841. The farm on which I was born was taken from the wilderness about 1855, and long before that he had purchased a farm elsewhere. Recently I applied to the Warden of the Michigan State Prison for information about the beginnings of the hoe-making there. He sent me an interesting report by one of the prisoners, who has been interested in the history of the institution; and from this I learn that contracts for hoe-making there were begun as early as 1848.

My father's hoe goes back, therefore, to the beginnings of an industry, and it is a witness of all the modern developments in manufacture and in agriculture. It spans one of the significant turning-points in history, when

manufacture succeeded handicraft and when farming emerged from a simple separate occupation to a commanding part in the discussions of men.



Yet, even so, a hoe is for personal and not for corporate use. I doubt whether we breed hoemen any more. Now and then I see an old man who can use a hoe with purpose and skill and with a feeling of good workmanship, but for the most part we disdain these simplicities and pride ourselves on grander things. Thereby do we miss some of the essentials and deprive ourselves of many simple means of self-expression. When I see someone using a hoe I do not catch the feeling of pride in the implement or satisfaction in the deft handling of it, quite aside from its gross usefulness in opening the ground and covering the seed.

I remember that I looked forward with pleasure to hoeing the corn, a labor that now arouses surprise. For one thing, it was escape from harder labors; and the long rows of corn invited me, with the burrows of moles and mice, the yellow-birds that nested in trees in the growing summer, and the runnels that heavy rains had cut. The odors of the corn and the ground were wholesome and pleasant. Quickly the growing corn had made a forest since planting time, and when it became head

high to a boy and the tassels were in the tops, the field became a hiding-place for many wild creatures and there were mysteries in the shadowed depths; we went straight into these mysteries when we hoed the corn for the last time in the season, and every fence-corner at the end of the rows was another world of interest. Father took one row and I another alongside, and patiently we went back and forth across the field, laying the pigweeds and thistles along the spaces, straightening up the lopped and broken stalks. The rows looked thankful when we had done with them. There was not much conversation; there did not need to be; there was interest all along the route; we were part of the silence of nature; but the few words I heard were full of meaning and they sank deep.

Often I am tempted to contrast these two old implements, the gun and the hoe, and to estimate their values. I reflect that the gun does not express a man's life, but is a weapon to be used on occasion, and for this one the occasion was indeed dire and heroic. Its conquests ended, it was hung away and was brought out only for display. But the hoe was a companion throughout a man's productive lifetime. It was never on parade. It did its work steadfastly

and well, and no one paused to give it notice. It made no mourners. It helped to make the land better, the crops better, and the man better, and it entered into the life of a boy. If the first requisite of social service is that a man shall do his own work well, then the old hoe has been verily an implement of human welfare and there need be no apology for hanging it alongside the heirloom firelock.

Now that we are so eagerly aware of all our troubles, the hoe recalls another time; and as I look back on those cornfield days I am aware that I never heard a complaint about farming from my father. We did not think of it that way. We were farmers; it was ours to make the farm worth while and to be satisfied. We did not compare our lot with that of others. We went about our farming as the days came, the program being determined by the weather and the seasons. Nor do I recall laments about the weather: it will come out right in the end, we shall follow the Lord's will,—this was the attitude.

Perhaps these practices and outlooks cannot develop the most skillful or productive farming, but farming was not then a competitive business. There were years of "glut," but we had not heard about "surplus." We needed little and were never in want. We had not learned to substitute machines for men. We knew nothing about "efficiency," and cost-accounting was

not even in the penumbra of dreams. The men of that stripe and generation would have resented the idea that farming can be measured by money; it was too good for that.

All this is very crude and far away; but the old hoe still hangs by the clock as the days are ticked off one by one, and I am glad that it led me through the rows of corn.

XVI

Wind

It is explained that wind is air in motion. So be it; but this does not tell me why the wind brought me the scent of April or roared down my chimney when the storm drove over the hills.

The wind is taken out of the limbo of conjecture and is a subject for scientific study; it is so with all the phenomena of nature; yet in all this reassuring progress, not one whit of human interest has been lost. The mysteries are more rational, but they are mysteries still. To the accumulated legend and literature of the holy past we may add the noble prospect of scientific discovery. No longer are the "windows of heaven" taken literally, to be opened by angels and the storms let loose; for natural science is not literal and the imagination is stimulated, disciplined, and set free.

The fancy of the winds runs across human history. The winds were within the caprice of the gods and demons, held in leash for the good or the punishment of men, subject to favor and petition. They were amenable to conjuration, as testified by the selling of favorable winds to

mariners in medieval times. Under the domination of the Prince of the Power of the Air, the weather had a theological explanation. Only within a century have we acknowledged the winds to be governed by the operation of law; and to this day there are those who will not understand and who look into the wind with superstitious fear.

No more does Æolus hold the winds in his bag; the ancient explanations have lost their reality and are now poetic; even if we know how and whence the North-wind comes we still may speak of it, on fitting occasions, as old Boreas in his great cloak and high boots sending chill into the hearts of men. With reverence for the Past and with admiration for the beauty of personification, we may still contemplate the Tower of the Winds at Athens, and wonder at its water-clock contrivance. There is Boreas depicted; and also Kaikias, the Northeast-wind, rattling his slingstones of snow and hail; Apheliotes, the East-wind, with fruit and flowers in his mantle; Eurus, the Southeast-wind, bringing the dawn; Notus, the South-wind, pouring his warm libation from his jar; Lips, the Southwest-wind, who still brings the sailor home; Zephyrus, gentle barefooted West-wind, youthful and lightly clad, scattering flowers as he flees; Argestes or Sciron, the Northwest-wind, with the pot of charcoals to conjure hot dry weather. Beauty still is in the mind's image

of the wind, and poets still may weave its intangible substance into dreams.

The wind is the universal renovator of the earth. Imagine, if you can, a world of stationary atmosphere. It would not be a place for human life. No clouds would float across the sky; no breeze before the rain bring tidings of relief, in fact no rain; no panorama of the moving fields of grain; no roar across the landscape when winter hunts the shepherd home; no moving whisper of the dawn and no gentle balm of twilight; no sail on any sea, no freedom in the heat and cold. The wind is in every ear of corn, in the flowers on the plains, in the bounding life of herds. The calm indeed is pleasant when the temperature is agreeable, but only by contrast with the wind.

The air-movement may be silent but the wind gives tone to everything it meets, although often inaudible to all but the attentive ear; it is the universal voice of nature. Trees become vocal; desert sands respond; lattices and eaves at night are wide awake; the seas and lakes become sonorous. The high wind lashes across the fields and the low wind breathes in the grass; the surface of the earth finds voice and expresses itself when the wind comes.

Language is full of the voices of the winds; they blow and sigh and wail; they whistle and are shrill; they moan on the corners; they rustle in the leaves; they shriek over the house-

tops; they sing in the wires; in the quiet days they are gently astir in hanging boughs and whisper as they pass. And again the voices are majestic, and constitute the major intonations. In Alexander Smith's "Life Drama" the wind is a "grand old harper" who "smote his thunder-harp of pines." Those who have ears may catch the sounds of the winds in every mood, and be comforted.

Little do we recognize how much the wind is part of the circumstance of life. But if we bring together the words for the wind-experiences we realize at once how closely we have lived with winds. A good half hundred words are in the English. Aside from the names of the major kinds of winds themselves, we know in daily speech the little variants, the puff of wind, the gust, the whiff, the blast, the breeze, the zephyr, the squall and gale and storm and tempest; and we apply our own life-process to it when we speak of a breath of air.

The farmer has the wind in his face. He meets it squarely. It is his by right of dominion. He does not avoid it, even if now and then he must seek protection. So much is it a part of him that he does not think of it, yet he would not be without it. He knows, even if only subconsciously, that it is the activating force of his situation. It enables him to make his crops. In olden time it ground his grain, and to this day it pumps his water although its

place is taken more and more by oil and gasoline, but probably there would be no gasoline had there not been a motile atmosphere in the dim ages.

I visited a farmer who had harnessed his streams and piped his springs to buildings and had otherwise utilized his natural resources; his outstanding regret was the fact that he could find no useful work for the wind to do and it was "going to waste" as it passed over his farm, thus expressing the old innate conviction that the wind belonged to him for his use; but the wind was nevertheless aiding in pumping water into the cornstalks that he would soon cut and put into the silo.



The wind is the index of the changes in the weather, pointing the direction in twig and grass and drifting things and impressing it on the cheeks and the accent of the breath. Once it was supposed that winds have no directions of their own, but waft and wander without hindrance everywhere. This idea is reflected in the saying that inconstant and irresponsible folk are as fickle as the wind; and the vane is an emblem of all unsteadiness. A person may be a weather-cock. Yet since Benjamin Franklin traced the circuitous storm, we know that winds have routes or at least have reasons; not even

the winds are free from restraint; and some day, when the upper atmosphere is better known and sun relationship more closely understood we shall probably have a new kind of prediction of wind and weather.

Yet the wind is the earth's rover. Whatever may be the physics of the air's motion, the wind as we imagine it sweeps far over the earth. We think of it, in the northern hemisphere, as bringing the cold from the North and the warmth from the South, the dust from the roads and plains; it drives the birds far out to sea, and fills the sails of big and little ships. It is a sensation when one finds oneself with the sun far to the northward, and the winds bring the cold from the South. But wherever we are, the winds provide the circulation on the planet.

Deeper than the deepest ocean is the sea of air. At the bottom of this sea we live. We could not stand alone without its support. In the ocean are the different strata of life from the bottom to the surface. The swimming things do not live indiscriminately all through the deeps of the ocean, but each kind has its vertical range. There are currents and rivers in the ocean. So in the sea of air, the flying things have their vertical ranges. The song-birds and the sparrows and the insects are near the ground. The swallows and swifts fly higher up. Hawks and vultures may be higher still. I was much impressed as a young boy with Sir S. W.

Baker's account of the vultures that he saw appearing first as black specks in the blue, as he lay on his back in the regions of the Nile tributaries beside a carcass of the hunt: how high had they been and how did they know? And rivers in the air are winds, with which vultures and other birds may wing and float, which brings us the warm soft rains of spring, the deluges of summer, the hails and snows of hoary winter, or the drenching downpours of the rainy season. Very wonderful are these rivers and minor currents that condition the life of vultures and of cattle and crops and men.

The winds we cannot control. In spite of all our cunning, they still will blow. Here man must have recourse to his powers of adaptation. He fits himself to them. In this way is he disciplined, and in this way likewise does he thrive. Some things we must accept. I like Lowell's statement in his "Democracy" that the only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat. Indeed, "the wind bloweth where it listeth." In the presence of the wind, morning, noon, and blessed night, the man of the out-of-doors recognizes his kinship in nature.

If you are of the open and fear not, make for yourself a poem of the winds. It should express the inner moods of your life.

XVII

Rain

This morning the boughs are heavy with rain. The herbs are laden to the ground, some of them with their heads caught in the soil. The downpour began before midnight. We were aroused by the wind in the trees and the patter on the roof. We lay awake to hear the drift in the leaves, until the roar was in the spouts; then sleep was sweet in the balm of the rain.

At last the heat was broken. We were eager in the early morning to feel the freshness and to see the new earth. For still Elijah calls to Ahab: "Get thee up . . . ; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."

By eight o'clock the sun was out, and the bright fresh light glistened in every tree and bush. The grass was deep with hanging drops. The birds seemed unusually alert. The sky was clear and blue, washed clean of its dust. No work could be begun in garden or fields, although we were full of energy that the rain had brought. We were keen to be abroad and see the effects in ditches and tilled lands. Everything would be rinsed and fresh. Bare-

foot boys and girls were already in the pools, feeling the silt between their toes. But for us, grown old with conventionalities, it was either rubber boots or remain dry-shod about the buildings. When would the grass be dry again?

By ten o'clock the boughs had resumed their normal position, the weight having been removed before our very eyes and yet we had not seen it go. No magic carpet or golden wand of the old fairy-books could have wrought a more complete wizardry. Large drops were still hanging from the points of leaves, and little corpuscles still lay on leaves that were crumpled like cups. The herbs had begun to straighten by some force within them that we could not comprehend. The grass tops seemed dry but big drops would shake from them; the bottom still was full of wet.

By noon the herbage was dry, except in deep and shady places. The heavy wet had vanished somewhere, and we could not recall it if we would. We knew it had gone into thin air, but if we had not been born to such experience we should have stood dumb in wonder. The bare earth in the tilled fields was still wet and soft; unlike the leaves, the soil was soaked with free water and it would be giving up its moisture for a day or two, being wet on top as the water came up from below,—a process that filled us all day with something like a new sensation. The crops looked their best. The herbage shone

green, the wilt was gone, the corn leaves had unrolled.

There is tonic in the air today. The droning heats of mid-summer have given way to the sweeping surge of the downpour. The rain-barrels and tubs all are full. Crops are at work again. The live-stock has its old-time animation. The ground exhales a challenge to new effort, and we know that the earth is young and that its power has not waned; it is renewed when the solvent comes. Now that the spell is broken we shall expect more rain. We shall make good crops of corn and late potatoes, and are sure the ground will be in condition to fit for winter wheat. The fall pastures will be good. The silos will be filled. Wells will have deep sweet water. Little creeks that have been dry and weedy since May will run again.

Today is "growing weather," even though the season is late. The farmer knows what this weather is, but no man can define it or measure it. It is like a sensation, so indefinite is it and so elusive to describe and yet so real. The best things of life cannot be inventoried, and for the exalted moments we really have no symbols or names.

In all nature there is nothing so rejuvenating and so freshening as rain. It seems to arouse the very essence of all things inanimate and to awaken the souls of things that have being. There is life-giving vigor in it. So unlike is it

to ground and rocks and grass and trees and animals and buildings, even to brooks and lakes, that it seems like a drift from another world or some other existence when the drops shuttle down between the leaves, strike on shingle and pane, burst on the rocks, and send up bubbling columns on the pools. All things look up to the sky and rejoice when the rain is past and when the sun shines again between broken rapid clouds. The crops will drink it in. The animals will dry themselves and go far afield. I do not yet understand why there is such exuberance in mere wetness.

There are many kinds of rain, the "small rain" and "the great rain" as the King James version has it, the slow drifting rain that quietly and softly covers the earth, the mist of imperceptible drops that broods the landscape like a cloud and deposits itself as a soaking film on the garments, the windy rain that drives through the shutters and seeks every crevice, the roaring deluge that sweeps over the earth in fury and buries the land in torture and flood. Out of the same sky it all comes, wrought by the same forces but in varying degrees of intensity; and if we were privileged to see the drops forming I fancy we should not catch the differences. It is a marvelous thing that clouds should hold so much water that they can discharge torrents on everything beneath them.

Birds and other animals partake of the rain

more than we. I am always interested to watch their behavior in a shower. Human beings speak of being soaked, but they are thinking of clothes, as if raiment were part of them as are feathers or wool,—do we not speak of being "wet to the skin" as if the deluge had gone clear into us? And do we not pell-mell to shelter when the rain comes? Who goes afield in the rain? And yet if you would know the fields and the woods and marshes, prepare yourself well and take a leisurely walk when rain is abroad.



Yet rain is not always a blessing to the farmer. It may prevent the plowing, the seeding, the tillage; weeds grow provokingly fast; the grain sprouts in the shock and the harvest is lost. These are indeed misfortunes. They are risks of the occupation that must be reckoned in advance. A varied husbandry suffers least because some of the effort is sure to be saved even in the worst times. In periods of long wet weather I am glad of meadows and pastures that are more or less perennial and do not require tillage, and of animals that grow and yield their milk in spite of rain. The farm has been ditched and shaped to take care of the run-off and to circumvent the ravages of erosion. The buildings, let us hope, are in good repair, the yards graded for drainage and with

good walks to all essential points, the ditches and gutters free, the tools and food supplies well housed. The farmer is then conscious that he has done his best to adapt himself to his environment, and the rest is taken care of by an attitude of resignation and a calm acceptance of the natural hazards.

The hazards are in every occupation and business. They are in life, an integral part of it; otherwise we should live always without gratitude and thereby miss the great satisfactions. It is in the fact that most of the year is congenial to farming that the recompense lies.

The wild things also suffer from too much rain and too little rain, from burning heat and stinging cold, and for food in the bargain. They and we are parts in nature, partakers in the great adjustment. The earth was not made for man alone; we must give and take with the rest; but we hold the additional privilege to appreciate our situation and to be glad that we may know the rain. The naturalist stops not for fear of rain. I have never known a real farmer to quit the occupation because of the weather.

Through untraveled spaces the sun-rays come. Water on the rolling earth becomes invisible and is lifted to the sky. Clouds form across the firmament. Currents and countercurrents play an invisible pageantry. The drama breaks in lightning and rolls the welkin

with thunder. The imperceptible water is condensed to liquid and drops upon the earth to enliven it. Again the water is vaporized and lifted; again the rain descends, and again the beans and the cotton and cattle and men are renewed. Here is the recurring miracle of the ages of the earth, from the first man until the last; no wonder there is the impulse to uncover the head when the shower comes!

XVIII

Leaves

Again the leaves are falling. They cover the ground, but the twigs are bare. The leaves will lie in drifts and windrows; by spring they will be crunched and broken, and by autumn they will have passed into the forest floor and will be leaves no more. The twigs will stand all winter in the bitter air, apparently mere lifeless things; but one day in April or pregnant May the tinge of life will be in them, buds will swell and burst and soft new fabrics will unfold and spread themselves to the warming sun. How they will come or why no man is wise enough exactly to explain.

The twig that this year bore an ovate leaf will next year bear the same, with veins and margins of a pattern formed in some remote dim past, with minute hair and coverings of their own kind and theirs alone. And other twigs will bear leaves of other forms and patterns, likewise all their own, as unerringly as the Earth passes from Libra into Taurus, as steadfastly as the sun comes back to the equinox of March. So steadfast are they of their process and their destiny that by them men may prophesy.

A flat thin fragile tissue is a leaf, that detaches itself at the appointed season, keeping good time of the procession of the year. Why it should come from a round hard twig is beyond all calculation. Seen apart and without experience of miracles, no man would think a leaf and twig of the same genesis. They would not suggest relationship one with the other. And still less would they suggest mothership of the inert ground, or the transparencies of sunshine and of air. At these marvels men should stand with reverent mein, as in the midst of mysteries.

The leaves are falling one by one. Miracles are in the air.

XIX

Weed

They called it a weed, but it was only a thistle. If thistles were more useful than wheat we should call them a crop and the wheat would be a weed. Professor Roberts used to say that the worst weed in corn fields is corn, by which he meant that corn is customarily planted too thick. I sowed petunias in my garden; they made a glorious sight and my man was proud of them. Next year I planted onions on the place; the petunias came up again from self-sown seeds and he cursed them as weeds. If next year I plant petunias again and onions come up, then the onions will be weeds. Much time has been wasted in the effort to define a weed. We need no definition, but only a statement: a weed is a plant that is not wanted.

This statement I have made so many times that I have forgotten it, yet repetition may give it some standing. At all events, a weed is a plant. It surely is not wanted. In addition, most weeds have no direct uses to man, although we are fond of pigweed and dandelion greens, so much so that dandelions are cultivated for the purpose and they are no longer weeds until the area is needed for beans. Sweet

clover, johnson-grass and filaree are crops when wanted but nuisances when not wanted. Hemp becomes a rampant intruder. Celery and radish and fennel have run loose in California. The lantana we cultivate so carefully for its bloom in greenhouses and in the open in warm countries is a great pest in Hawaii. Cardoons have swept the pampas.

It is often said that a weed is a plant out of place, but this is not so. Nothing is more in place than a weed.

There are "weedy plants," by which it is meant that they have good powers of persistence and propagation and are more or less unattractive and they have the companionable habit of following man in his travels; they are good colonizers; they make the most of opportunities; they are prompt, always on time, faithful in adversity, and have other commendable qualities. I admire the way they make use of all the corners and odd places that men neglect or overlook. I heard a man fulminating at the docks that grew back of the woodshed, but I did not see that it was the fault of the docks.

Weeds are quick advertisers of poor farming and of too-much-to-do and of neglect. They are great schoolmasters; this I have also said so many times that I have forgotten it. They enforce tillage at all inconvenient times. They have kept men going from the time men first began to till the earth, or until a man gave up

and then they took possession and kept the ground in condition until another man came.

Some weeds are real invaders, conquerors of well-tilled fields. These must be met by outright effort, perhaps by a change in rotation or in the crop-scheme. The first consideration is not how they came there but why they thrive so lustily. Some of them make use of poor land; but in general a great abundance of successful weeds is a compliment to a man's soil.

Weeds are the great commoners of the vegetable world. They are no respecters of persons. There is no aristocracy among them nor pride of breeding; yet I suspect that if the truth were known we should find good genetics to have been in operation; this is suggested in their success. Weeds must profit by the "unintentional culture" named by Darwin. What might they become if intentionally cultivated? Yet many of them are well-tilled, or at least they take advantage of the preparation and tilling; in the corn-belt the pigweeds may be as good as the corn.

The earth would be bare and bald indeed were it not for the weeds. Man tills only a small part of the land he has cleared. He leaves much of it furrowed, scarred, and hard-featured. The weeds of one kind or another take up the task of recovering it. The gullying stops. Mold forms. All the biological processes of soil building go forward. The waste places about man's

slovenly habitations are covered; we speak of ragweed and plantain as ugly plants, but this is because of their association with man's unkempt by-places and wastes.

Every weed means something. There is good reason why it grows there rather than elsewhere, why it prefers one region or soil or exposure. Sometimes its presence is indication that it has a life-cycle similar to that of the plant with which it associates, as the cockle in the wheat, and the late annual weeds that take advantage of the cessation of tillage when the crop is "laid by." It is interesting to inquire why mulleins and evening primroses are partial to old dry grass-lands; why knotweed and broad-leaved plantain cover hard tramped yards; why tarweed, mustard and burdocks usurp vacant lots; why pusley is unknown in some places.



We allow no sentiment to attach to weeds, yet the essential interest is there. Let me tell you a story. It was in a Taoist Temple far away in Honan. Strange were the rites of the priests before the idols. Every utensil, every rude piece of furniture, the food wherewith to find sustenance for the tramps in the torturing heat and wet, the outlines of the clustered buildings, the speech and the conduct of the

few people on this border-land, were all outlandish to an intruder from the occident. The nights came down like a pall of loneliness over the shaven hills, the doors were bolted, and the morning was far away. Even the plants, the birds, and the insects were strange. But there on the old stone temple-wall grew the catnip, the same catnip that is under my window in America, the same that has greeted me in many wanderings in other lands. What memories it held, and what sweeps of the earth's surface were in its crenate leaves and its odor! Farmyards and castles, fields at evening, walks where every soul was a stranger, picturesque walls and ruins, lost days of youth with fragrant catnip-tea, folk-lore, herbarium at home, the years that have crowded each other so fast and so fast,—these were all in the catnip plants that grew in the chinks of the old wall of the temple in China.

Often am I impressed that travelers never see the weeds, and we know that other folk spurn them; and yet they are messengers sent around the world, the fore-guard of comradeship, the perfect adaptation to all the conditions and needs of life, the tell-tales of old routes of trade. I have learned to love the weeds, so often have they been my companions on solitary journeys. Always do I look for them, as I look for old friends. Rank and raw, uncouth, broken and torn and ragged, often the

bearers of heavy odors, asking no quarter, yielding no treasure, the weeds are the fellow-rovers on the pathways of life.

Nor was the catnip the only old acquaintance back in China far from the thoroughfares of travel. In the yard of the temple were plantain, wild carrot, the sprawling mallow bearing the "cheeses" of childhood, and the black nightshade. Near by were smartweeds and docks, foxtail-grass, and pepper-grass; and in one corner was a lusty plant of fennel, the same fennel that I found growing shoulder high in my garden when I came home. I was not so very far away, with so many good friends to meet me.

The weeds will not release their guardianship. Their hosts will contend with men wherever farmers break the earth. As the contests close, with the more careful use of land, the struggle of the opposing powers will become more intense. I have no fear of the outcome. I like to think of farmers, in the long conflicts, as conquering men.

XX

Peach

It is Peach Day, that you have set aside to celebrate the products of this Peninsula. I trust we have come with sentiments alert, with a readiness of adoration of the fruit that is so characteristic of this alluring land between the ocean and the bay.

Here I hold a peach. It is a shapely oblong-spherical body nearly three inches in diameter, pleasant to clasp in the fingers, choice in its fragrance, captivating in its intergrade of tints. I do not know why it came here. I know that last winter a bare tree stood in yonder orchard, giving no sign of any intention but to be a bare tree. Then one day it shook itself loose in the glory of the resurrection we know as spring, and a sheet of pink brilliancy covered it.

The blossoms fell. Leaves came. A little object began to swell on a last year's twig, white-gray and fuzzy and solid. A brown dry papery ring fell from its end. The thread-like point withered and dropped away. The object gradually grew, we do not know why, it became as large as a marble and almost as hard, the white-gray fuzz turned to green, a groove showed along its side. Presently it took form, a blush

was on the sunny side, and a passer-by exclaimed, "Oh, there is a peach."

A man from Mars, perhaps one no farther away than the depths of the great city yonder, seeing this savory fruit in my hand and the flexile tree in the orchard, would not connect one with the other.

Out of the tree, bare but a few months ago, this great peach has come, the birth of a twig no thicker than my pencil. Tree and twig and peach all came out of the soil and the air. This peach is oxygen, yet you never saw oxygen to recognize it as a separate substance; it is hydrogen, yet you have not seen hydrogen as an entity; it is carbon, the carbon you see in yonder smoke; it is nitrogen, that you have not perceived as such although you are always within it; it is calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, that you have seen only in their compounds; it is iron, the iron that is in the locomotive even now belching to start from the station over there; it is potassium, and other elements beside.

It is water,—water delicately and deliciously flavored with many intricate compounds. Perhaps this peach is nearly ninety per cent water, yet so nicely is the fluid held in fiber and cell that I revolve the fruit as I may and it does not spill.

This peach is sunshine. It is night, the twilight, and the dawn. It is dew and rain. It is

noon, and wind, and weather. It is heat and cold. It is the sequence of the seasons, winter and spring, summer and autumn, and winter again, all of which have gone into the tree that gave it birth.

It is the linkage of the elements and the days, and the showers that freshen the earth. The peach is more, even, than all this: it is a living thing, vital with its own protoplasm, performing a thousand secrets hidden deep in its cells, containing its own energy to assimilate and to grow and to catch the tints of the rainbow and the fragrance of clean fresh winds.

Here with light pressure I part the fruit in halves. The aroma is an elixir. The wrinkled pit or stone is in the center, surrounded by a darker luster like an aureole; for securely inside this stone lies the mysterious kernel, which is an embryo peach-tree; and next year the embryo will not forget to grow, if buried in the ground, nor fail to make a peach-tree; and in the years to come, when you and I shall not be here to see, it or its progeny will bear peaches still.

The continuity of the centuries is in the flat kernel within this stony pit. I do not know why a peach-pit and not a plum-pit is in this place; I do not know whence on the earth the peach came; I do not know how or why this fruit chose or elaborated its nutrients in such proportions as to make itself a peach and not an

apricot. Had I before me unlabelled chemical analyses of a peach and an apricot I suppose I could not tell which was which, so nearly would they be alike; size, shape, color, texture of skin and flesh, season, most of the attributes that distinguish the two fruits to us, might not be shown. Yet here is the peach in my hand, perfect and complete; it is mine.

You have made the conditions right. You have chosen the land that the tree might thrive. You have tilled the soil. You have protected the tree from enemies. You have guarded it for several or many years. You have beheld the miracle.

XXI

Horse

It is now a common remark that the horse will soon be obsolete. Persons who make this statement are thinking of the automobile and of North America.

The ten years between 1910 and 1920 witnessed a marvelous extension of the use of motor vehicles both for pleasure and for freighting. We began to miss horses from the highways in the United States, and hitching places began to disappear from the towns. The livery-stable passed out. Horse-shoeing shops vanished from the four-corners, thus taking from the countryside one of its most striking elements of local color and neighborhood service; and in passing let me say that their places, in these respects, cannot be taken by the showy roadside stands of the present day that represent supply companies far away and commodities of small service to the region and that introduce an undesirable advertising feature.

In this period the number of horses fell off decidedly in the cities of the United States, but horses on farms showed an increase, in the census estimates, of approximately one per cent, which is roughly the increase in number of

farms; that is, the number of horses, as between the two epochs, remained essentially constant. Mules showed a striking increase.

Estimates show that since 1920 in the United States there has been a 12 per cent decrease in horses and mules, as a group, on farms. This decrease may be explained largely if not wholly by the situation in agriculture itself; part of it is probably associated with the 5 per cent estimated decrease in harvested crop land. The withdrawal of three million horses and mules from the farms of the country released great areas of land and much labor for the production of human food and supplies, and has probably contributed considerably to the food surplusage. It will be important if we can determine, in the forthcoming census, what are the respective influences over a considerable series of years of passenger cars and tractors on the horse and mule population of the farms.

The extension of mechanical power and transportation has been an outstanding fact in the farming affairs of recent years in North America. We may expect the changes from the old order to continue, and with commendable results. Farm procedure must be adjusted and readjusted. But this does not mean the elimination of the horse from farming. The tractor or touring car cannot take his place in any number of the common farm operations. Long ago the horse was released from the tread-mills and

later from the great sweeps of the threshing-machines. It is to be expected that his sphere of labor will be further restricted; but on the other hand he will be needed in new capacities to serve the machines. We shall need better horses, with more care in their breeding and training to meet the new demands.

It is said that the so-called "passing of the horse" and the coming of motive power means greater efficiency and the saving of time. But I am not always so sure of this. In the horse days the family went to town perhaps once a week and brought back the needed supplies: it was an event. Now we dash miles away on the slightest pretext or no pretext at all, perhaps to purchase a few pennyworths of trifles that might not have been purchased at all some years ago; and it is a commonplace. Paved roads are easy and alluring. A farmer told me the other day that one of his household drove ten miles away to get ten cents' worth of something-or-other.

Whatever may be the case in the present hour, in my youth every farm boy must have a colt of his own. This colt was to be of the driving-horse type; the boy would break him and train him and have visions of a red buggy with spindle spokes, and felloes with black lines and bowed thills with stripy ornaments.

The harness would be of the lightest and simplest fashion, without breeching or collar or hames; only a breast-collar would answer for the smart turn-out that was in the boy's mind; and the horse of his fancy would be guided by his word, with the least possible attention to the reins. The animal would be groomed and polished and petted, the last thought before going to school and the first thought on coming home.

I suppose this youthful energy is now expended on an automobile. But the effect on the boy will be far different. In America, where every farm has had a horse and usually several of them (because of the large farms and long distances of travel and abundant cheap feed), the breaking and training of the colts has had a marked influence in training the boys to self-reliance, deft handicraft, good judgment and quick decision. The alertness of the farm boy has been due in no small degree to his handling of the horse. The boy has become a school-master, a trainer of animals, almost before he entered his teens; for the horse is largely what his trainer makes him. Here is his first exercise of the dominion that belongs to a man. As a colt is more than a machine, and as he grows into horsehood gradually and as all the care is associated with processes of life, the boy comes into a variety of contacts that he meets in no other way. The care of a favorite horse

when sick calls for sympathy and patience. I wonder whether the farm boys of the next generation will have missed a resource of high value.

To those of us who were first associated with oxen and logging and heavy old lumbering wagons, the horse brought a quality of life that I fear is not recognized or appreciated by those of modern time. The quick movements, the high head, the spirited eye, the style of the horse, appealed to the imagination in those bucolic bovine days, and the whirl of the buggy wheels would go spinning through the head. What immense journeys we made when the horse came, what wonderful woods and gulches we saw, what strange peoples we hailed as we rolled over the roads! It comes back to me like a far-off magic, and I yet remember the sensations as we sped down the "hills" (which were only divides between contiguous ravines). These thrilling experiences must have addled the head of the youngster until he craved other excitement, for I remember that once in going over and down one of these declivities I said to my father that some day there would be carriages not drawn even by horses. Such things must have been talked about in those far-away days.

In the vast distances of America the horse has played an unimaginable part in the drama of the great conquest. I remember the prairie

schooners headed for the limitless West, a thousand miles and more away. The drivers had the vision of the promised land, and the horse fulfilled it. Day by day, night after night, in heat and cold, on table-lands and over mountains, in fevered swamps, by strange forests, over riverbeds where floods had been, in coulées and on long grassy plains, in sand and dust and mire, the horses plodded on. The wagons groaned and creaked. The ruts grew deep with every new load. Sometimes Indians watched and wild beasts were startled and bounded away. To all this the faithful horses were dumb. They had no part in the program, no reward in the victory, yielded no expression to the landscape: theirs was to pull and to obey. Yet the horse had the strength to break away, to lie down and go no farther, to kick the outfit into fragments. He was fearful in war in the early centuries, a new enginery to strike consternation into the enemy. "The glory of his snorting is terrible," as the New Version renders the rebuke in Job. "He goeth out to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear and is not dismayed; neither turneth he back from the sword." Yet this is the animal that in later time obeyed the demands of peace and conquered a continent by plodding work on overlands and on uncounted short-hauls everywhere, the faithful servant of the advancing hosts of men.

High-spirited by nature, accustomed to the

romping freedom of wide open spaces, yet the horse is the most faithful and effective of all the bonded slaves man has recruited in the animal world. Some strange element of docility must have been implanted by nature in the plexus of his brain; and centuries of accumulated precept and practice must have trained the man to be master of the horse.

In many important ways the horse was the center of the farm operations; in some cases this is true in the present day. His harness and other gear were the every-day equipment, with which the farm boy was familiar from his earliest years; they were his to handle and to tinker. He knew the burble in the nostrils when the barn doors were opened in the morning, the eager expectant ears, the impatient attitude for water and food. With the horses he was off to the fields for the day's work; their strong odor was part of him; the gait, the pull, the strain were in his muscles also; he was keen with them for the noon hour when, sweating under the collars and the back-pad, they bubbled their noses into the water-trough. He knew how tired they were at night when he stripped their heavy harnesses and they evidenced their relief. He heard their stamp in the night. Now and then when a spirited horse was turned loose and naked in pasture he saw the elevated head and flowing mane and heard the high

whinny like an echo of ancestral plains and a challenge to the world.

Only a few years ago there was a caste system in the horse world. The aristocrats among them drew the magnates, the well-to-do, and all the persons of importance, perhaps with liveries and attendants in the bargain. Now prosperous men and women express their prosperity by the brand of machine they buy, as befits the mechanical and inventive age in which we live. Now, also, the horse, with us in the United States, is only one of the working-class (forgetting for the moment the race-courses). He still carries much of the burden of the world, but mostly in the back-ground and out of sight. He is essentially now a farm animal, for only eight per cent of the horses in the United States are elsewhere than on farms. He is becoming a creature apart, characteristic of a great background population. These people he will still express, and the boy will delight to train a colt in all the years we can foresee.

I cannot forego the memories of certain horses I knew, friends and companions of my younger days. They knew my voice, I knew their ways. We knew the roads and fields together. I rolled and stood upon their backs and somersaulted from them; they never told any-

body. One fair horse, a gentle but a lively bay, Fred by right of name, was my special comrade until old age overtook him. Uncounted miles the bareback horse and the barefooted boy went alone in the wild new places. In those far-off days, before the woods and back lands were fenced, we hunted the cattle together day by day throughout the grazing seasons. Rangy and limber cattle they were, not carrying the cargo of milk of these later tamer times, and they went miles away when turned loose in the early morning. But Fred and I knew the tip-tap of their bells, and whether they were grazing, or walking, or lying down chewing the cud.

Often the night overtook us. I remember once being hopelessly lost at nightfall in a great virgin forest. I had missed all the trails and marks I knew. The darkness was intense. Startling sounds came out of the depths. Night odors enveloped us. Cool gusts rushed out of mysterious places. I peered for strange shapes, and fears began to take form, although fear was not supposed to haunt boys brought up against the big woods. Once I heard a deep voice almost human and very close by. Then I dropped the reins on Fred's shoulders, threw myself on his neck with my arms about it, and asked him to take me home. There I clung as he went between great tree shafts, pushed through brush, jumped over logs, and plowed through bogs. As he was silent, so was I. After

a long time he stopped, dead still. I straightened up, and saw ourselves dimly in a highway. I asked him to go; he well knew the way; near midnight we were at the barn.

Once we were caught beyond a raging forest fire, such as sweeps through miles of slashing and bark-peeling in dry times, with intense heat and fearful flying embers and belching sheets of flame. I had been in such fires before, but this time we seemed to be completely cut off from home, and we knew not where we would come out if we took to the back country. Several exits we tried in vain. Finally I chose an old timber road then roaring with fire, dropped the reins, threw my arms about Fred's neck, shut my eyes, and said, "Run for your life." Like the wind, I thought, we went through the fire that pressed us on all sides; then Fred stopped, and we were safe once more.

An old bell of a leader-cow hangs over my table as I write. I have just rocked it with my pen. It emits tones that have been silent through the years. Once more the great woods stand mysterious and dark, the log-roads run into them and are lost, I hear footfalls I do not know, and soon Fred and I will sight the cows browsing in a clearing and he will circle them, and then we shall all go home together.

In his later days poor Fred was foundered and became stiff in his fore quarters. He would often stumble and fall, but he always waited

for me to get up. His easy gallop was great sport in the summer days, and he seemed to know that I enjoyed it. Once he stumbled and fell heavily. I went over his head in a great crash and must have been stunned, for I remember Fred trying to rouse me with his nose.

Old Fred, companion of a boy, is dead long years and years ago. He has no grave. No rites were said. For aught I know the elements that comprised his supple frame and gentle nature may have entered into other horses that boys have loved in later years. Perhaps they too have gone away together in twilight and at noon and have come to the Gates of Wonder.

XXII

Evening

Uncle Daniel quit when the sun did. It was "blasphemous-like" to work in the field after the sun had finished. The sun was Uncle Daniel's time-piece. He was up with the sun, for that was the beginning of a Lord's day and one should not waste the Lord's time in bed. He worked till the sun went down, and as a consequence he frequently took a half or whole day off. Sun-to-sun made a natural day, for did not the Good Book speak of the evening and the morning of the sixth day when man was put at work? Sometimes when haying or harvest was on, the bay-and-gray team would still be in the field at sundown, but Uncle Daniel would always stop and wait for the sun to sink out of sight, as a fitting observance of the proprieties.

To "lay abed" long after the sun is up and to spend half of the night "cuttin' up" by lamplight was perilously near blasphemy to Uncle Daniel. He was sure the sun was made for a purpose and it would not be shining in the early morning unless it ought to shine; the chickens and cows knew this. He was suspicious of those persons who had things to do that could not be done in day time; they would bear watching.

And the evening was made for rest and the night for sleep.

To Uncle Daniel the evening was a reality, not merely a time to change clothes or to go to a show. It was a time for reverential pause and for thinking over the good and evil, the work and the accomplishment, of the day. In this attitude there was real relaxation, and a good preparation for honest sleep. He would enjoy the sunrise.

Hush is on the fields when the sun sinks beyond the West. Soon the birds begin to drop one by one into trees and other shelter; they are in their accustomed places. In spring the robin curls his vesper deep into the gloaming. The dog is at home. A subdued sound is in the barnyard. The cows are waiting to be milked. Horses, cattle and wild things afield will soon be lying down for the night. It is a natural halt in the activities of the day. The courses of events are in halves; evening and twilight are an ending and a beginning, although one event so softly slips into the other that we are not excited by such a stupendous change.

I like to think of the farmer as having his field work so well in hand that he can enjoy the hallowed pause of evening, not too tired for appreciation, not disinclined to yield to its impressions. Isaac, the cattleman, "went out to meditate in the field at the eventide." It is the time often to walk alone over the fields, par-

ticularly in spring and summer, in temperate regions, when the twilight is long. It is a time to see pastures and meadows leisurely, relieved from strain of labor; to go to the back fields and note what is happening there; to sit on stone or log and let the farm come to one; to listen by the brook; to hold converse with the herds, when they are quiet; to enter the woodlot in the gloaming; to break through weeds and brush; to stop at nest and burrow; to see new shapes arise; to walk back to the house in the late cool twilight.

At twilight are the senses rested and alert, the passions subdued, and the mind ready for suggestions. It is then that the exigencies of the day may be allowed to drop away, and the native nobler impulses find expression. It is a time for consecration, to the countryman particularly. It should be so to all men, for as Halleck writes, "There is an evening twilight of the heart." In Eden "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day," which to us visualizes the evening.

Few of us know the evening any more. All we know is flare of lights, a bit of reading under the lamp, an automobile ride, a show, some triviality to kill the time painlessly. Few of us are so placed that we can know it in the old and natural way. Few of us have a horizon line, or really see the stars come out or note the constellations, or feel the moonrise, or know the

forewinds of the night. We are covered by roofs and limited by conveniences and conventionalities. The welkin of the approaching night is only a subject for exclamation now and then; it is not a canopy to live under.

It is easy to spoil the twilight.

XXIII

Morning

If few of us know evening, still fewer know the morning. This is attested by the daylight-saving expedient whereby, by setting the clock ahead, we get ourselves up an hour earlier for a season without shocking our sensibilities.

The night has given us relief, if digestion is good, and courage returns with morning light; much of this courage is lost if we lie too long, dallying with the day. There is decision in prompt rising. If the first part of the night has not been spent in some time-killing occupation and if we have not contracted the easy indulgence of reading in bed, then recuperation should be complete by sunrise; prompt sleeping is a condition to prompt rising.

It is a good occupation that requires attention early in the morning. The person acquires the habit of living a natural day, and he is likely to bring a refreshing nativeness to the problems of life. He is disinclined to give first importance to arbitrary and artificial programs.

Most of us seem to be "at odds with morning," to adapt the reply of Lady Macbeth. We are in a state of grievance for having had to get up and of rebellion in general. This is not

a reassuring attitude for a day's satisfaction. Of all the hours of the twenty-four, the hour when the sun and we get up together should be the most exhilarating; the exhilaration of freshness is gone an hour or two later; we have missed the opportunity. We found the "secret of arcady," in Louise Chandler Moulton's phrase, "when the morning birds were mad with glee." One of the offices of morning in the scheme of nature is its regeneration or renewal of all things; in the Mosaic account even the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared.

It is not necessary always to await the sunrise to partake in the universal awakening. Some of the best elements of it are in the dawn, which is the first eye-opening of the day; for then an indefinable charm of newness and change is on the landscape. If one is not circumscribed by the customs of genteel society, if the mind is open to suggestion, one may then partake in the creation,—when the stars go out and the world emerges from Chaos, when perhaps the crescent moon is in the East with its points reversed, when the birds awake and cattle rise and stretch in cool pastures, when the breath of the dew begins to distill, and voices are awake on distant farmsteads. If one is a companion of the early morning one feels a peculiar ownership in the total affairs of the day. For the joy of working afield in the early

morning, in fact for the joy of working at all, I commend Thoreau's account of his bean-field at Walden. "All the morning, glad of your society," the brown-thrasher sings, and you prefer the song "to leached ashes or plaster. It was a cheap sort of top dressing in which I had entire faith."

Morning is a specially appropriate time for stirring the soil and pulling weeds. Vigor is in the arms. We go into the work with valor, even audacity. The combative instincts are strong. The day is still cool. A man will go lustily through a patch of weeds that he would hardly attack at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Undoubtedly personal contact with the early morning makes for good health and cheerfulness. I suppose this is because habitual prompt rising is conditioned on regular habits, considerate eating, proper use of the night, and a mental attitude of readiness. The dissipator can have no real joy of morning; that time is to him an awkward experience.

But the impulsion to seasonable rising and to the enjoyment of the morning is for most early risers not the sentiment of welcome to a new-born day. It lies in the practical necessity of the pursuit to which one is committed, as I have suggested. If one's work is one's own, and if it progresses toward a steadfast permanent result, one is eager to be about it. Few of us, aside from the farmer, can look forward to any-

thing like a permanent property or establishment. Undoubtedly it is partly to satisfy the desire for something enduring that persons of means erect monumental buildings and found institutions. We are wont to say in this country that hard roads and telephones and the rest are radically changing the open country; yet, comparatively, changes in the properties themselves come slowly. I know farms that have remained essentially the same for more than half a century, and probably they will not change greatly in another fifty years. The farm-house in which my father was born more than one hundred years ago still stands and is occupied, and it was not then new. There is pride in old farm buildings, even though inconvenient, for memories cling to them tenaciously. It is good that some of the homes of men remain generation after generation, tying the years together. Even yet it is expected that the farm is to remain in the family. When I see the man at work in the early hours I know that back of his labor is the feeling, perhaps unrecognized by himself, that he is working for his farm and for his natural successors, not for an employer. He has reason to expect that at least his land and its improvements will remain. It is worth while to be up with the sun; the morning, like the evening, is a reality.

Hard against absorbing realities, the sunriser is not only ready but is ardent. What

will the morning be? What new satisfactions will it open? Are you eager to take hold of the new day? If not, inquire of yourself for the reasons. If there is to be enthusiasm for life, it should be manifest at least in the renewal of morning.

This morning the stars were fading out when I went afield. A uniform indistinct gray was over the sky and I could not make out whether the day would be fair. A delicious coolness enveloped me. Mists were diffused over the fields and hung heavily in the herbage. The dew was deep and water-gray, for no reflecting light had yet struck it; the grass and fences and corn-tops were soaked with it. Over the tufts of grass were spread the funnel-webs of agelena, as misty as the night.

When I first came out, the upper branches of the trees were astir but now a hush was on the landscape as if in preparation for a shifting of scenes. A bright light came on the tree-tops and descended to the lower growths. A few late sweet pinks glowed in the garden as I passed, still holding the memory of June. Thin recemes of the second bloom of a pale larkspur stood by the walk. The marble-white of snow-berries shone like candy-balls on their slender spray. A clump of rugosa roses was wide awake with the glimmer on the thin fair bloom.

The little erect green heads of bindweed were evident on the hedge. A robin quipped. There was the quirk of a nuthatch from a near-by bole. The phebe-call of the chickadee came down from the grove, and then its more familiar cadencing note. I heard grackles somewhere. A flappy crow cawed far overhead. A flock of blackbirds went over. A dawn-winged dragon-fly zigzagged across my sight, and disappeared.

Now the light was strong on the eastward side of things, on houses with shiny windows, on furrowed trunks of trees, and indefinite shapeless shades, remnants of the night, stretched to northwestward. A faint violet flush appeared in the West. The darks were still under the bushes. On chimneys and upper stubs in dead trees single birds were perched, as if waiting. Hens were abroad and began to feed. The diffused noisy chatter of sparrows could be heard about the barns. A bunch of dogs awoke far away. Over the fence as I passed a pumpkin flower hung motionless three feet from the ground, in a festoon of young hops, having carried its gold through the night; a perfect object it was with its soft and crimply pointed curving lobes and deep bell in which the clumpy stigmas stood and the hollowed ovary-ring in the bottom; it was too good and rare to lose, so I set my camera for it and let it stand some minutes. A soft indefi-

nite fragrance was in the air, apparently a compound of many odors I could not identify.

The violet light now faded from the West. A golden dazzlement overspread the East. Then on the rim of the farther field thin low clouds broke and parted, the edges resplendent, and the limb of lord sun came through. Suddenly the fields were awake with splendor. A sweep of young goldenrod on a distant slope caught the lustre, and the glory went from treetops to roofs and high fences, the greensward took it up, and the water in the pond caught fire. For a few moments the brilliance and the wonder filled the air and earth. Then wagons began to move somewhere, a few hardy early risers emerged, smoke was in the chimneys, and the day became commonplace.

XXIV

Nails

"Pull out the nails before you come in."

"But they can be bought at the store cheaper than I can pull them."

"You have nothing else to do, and the store is far away."

The significance of this situation did not come to me then. Probably I had been told by some wise person that a boy's time was worth money and that nails and such trifles are cheaper than hours; and, besides, the old stick and the big rusty nails probably did not look any too attractive to a hungry boy.

A boy's time,—has it only a cash value? Is that not the time when habits of frugality, industry, obedience and self-help should be formed, and can these results be stated in any kind of bookkeeping? There are hours or minutes when time has no recognizable accounting value; it is better to employ them in effort that may not meet the needs of strict "efficiency" than to let them go to waste or the mind to lie fallow. And the store,—that was not my problem, for it was far away; my problem was the nails in a splintery hemlock scantling.

But on the whole I liked to pull nails. It was almost like play. Moreover, it saved me from weeding onions or cleaning out the cistern. These were "cut nails," with the four sharp angles and real heads, not the shiny improved kind that buckle in the middle. I think they did not hold so tight as the modern nail and were therefore better adapted to boys. They came out bent and crooked; some of the big spikes had to be hammered through the scantling and then driven back again for a better hold. Most of them had to be straightened; this was real sport, to put them on the end of the big tree-trunk block standing by the barn-door and to hammer them into shape; it was like making something; a boy could immediately see the result of his work; and how perfectly they would drive afterwards! I remember that when I had nails to drive I always chose the rusty ones or those that had been straightened, and I fear this pernicious habit has remained in some degree to the present year of efficiency. Perhaps there was a sense of ownership about it, for new nails were all alike and anybody could have them; in these days I suppose we would call this perversity by the big name "self-determination."

But I had not really intended to write about nails when I started this article. The title of an article or a lecture is one thing, the subject is quite another matter. I meant to pay my

respects to the gentle art of doing things yourself.

The hinge is broken on the hen-house door: fix it. The hoe needs a new handle; the strap is broken; the lock is out of order; the barn door is off the track; the saw is dull; the fence-post has rotted off; the gate is sagging; the clevis is bent and out of shape; a tooth is missing from the hayrake; the plow-handle is loose; the cross-cut saw is rusty; the pump will not work; the eave-trough needs painting; the pipe to the water-tank is stopped; a shingle is off the barn roof; a stanchion is rickety: do it yourself.

There are no servants to wait on you, no one to hire. There are no "regulations" about it, no one to consult for permission or regularity, no indirection. The little set of simple tools is a great consolation. Its employment to make things for oneself is good recreation. The hand tools were one of the wonders of my younger years. Many of them are now rare and some of them are obsolete. Last year I went to a hardware store to purchase an inch-and-a-half auger; I thought one would look well in my shop. The young man behind the counter wanted to know what I meant, how I spelled it, had never heard of such a tool. I asked him how folks bored big holes any more, and he replied that they did not bore them, they took them to town to be bored.

To be apt with hands and tools is to be "handy." The handiness means something when the work is real, and not make-believe; it has both interest and educational value. In all the range of human occupation I know of none that properly calls for so many kinds of hand-cleverness with simple elemental tools as farming. Of course there is evidence enough of the lack of any kind of hand skill not to say of plain indifference to appearances and to upkeep; but awkwardness and slovenliness are not a part of anything. Nothing is more suggestive than the old tools even if past their usefulness; with them go the boxes of nails and screws and nuts and bolts and washers probably all mixed as to sizes and kinds; they stand along the plate four and one-half feet above the floor near the window in the south end of the horse-barn; there is a bench the other side the window, with a big and little hammer, brace and bit, jack-plane, scythe-stone,—you know the rest if you have been there, and the spider-webs.

But I am not dealing here with memories except as I may state my theme. I hope farm tools and shops are better and cleaner than in the past, that the satisfaction of good workmanship is growing and that persons take pride in their ability to turn their hands to many kinds of action. It is a real problem how to train the hands and to produce something

worth while at the same time, and to make the training count toward life. It should be a necessity to try to eliminate go-betweens and indirectness in the usual needs and affairs, to wait on oneself, to enjoy the independence of it, not to depend on others. With the increasing complexity of houses and machines and the minute subdivision of labor we are forced more and more into the hands of experts and specialists, and there is danger that we become more helpless and indirect.

I think the pulling of nails meant more than simply saving the cost of new ones. If we pulled more nails, in a metaphorical sense, we should have less facility in calling on someone else.

XXV

One Hundred and Twenty-nine Farmers

To actual farmers I wrote in April, 1926, as follows, choosing persons, as far as possible, who make their living from farming:

> Now that the discouragements of agriculture are so much stressed, I am asking farmers in various parts of the country whether they really experience joy in farming and to indicate to me, if they will, what is the main satisfaction they find in the farmer's life.

I received reply from 129 persons, sometimes more than one letter, in thirty-three states and four Canadian provinces, fairly indicating the continent from Maine and New Brunswick to California and British Columbia; all the regions at present much distressed are represented, as well as all the New England States.

It has been a privilege to read these genuine letters. I have never before had such an interesting lot. I should like to publish many of them as they stand; but that I might have spontaneous expressions I promised that I would not quote any person by name. Some of the letters are expressed in literary skill.

All of them go directly to the heart of the question. Practically all the respondents consider the return from farming inadequate; as one of them expresses it, who has a good 200-acre farm, "It is necessary for us to pay the old farm about $1000 a year for the honor of helping to grow the nation's food supply if we live just decently." Some of the writers, however, attest that they are even now making satisfactory profits, but these men are mostly engaged in growing special or high-class products. None of them asks for government aid, and most of them are afraid of attempts at special legislation for the farmer. The letters do not reflect the discouragements one would expect, from the current publicity of the situation. But as I did not ask for a discussion of this side of the question, I shall not dwell on it here.

I wanted chiefly to know whether the "main satisfactions in the farmer's life" were still to be expressed in the sentiments, or whether these old values have been smothered by the current commercial emphasis. I find these old sentiments still strong in these letters and probably better stated than in my youth and in the period of my active work with the farming people. I shall quote a good number of these expressions, being convinced that we need to be reassured by them.

The city man might not realize these satis-

factions if he were to undertake farming; these joys are the rewards of those who have had long experience in the situations and have matured; none of these farmers would lure to the open country any person who by temperament and training is not adapted to the occupation.

To one not born to the situation, many of the satisfactions will seem unusual and perhaps of little moment; yet I know that my farm friends will appreciate such passing remarks as these, each from a different writer: I breathe pure air and drink water not brought to me in pipes. I like to see the stock eat. I want to dig in the soil. I am never out of work. The city is a cage. Those people who are not happy unless they can see a movie every night would better stay in town. I would not trade my farm home for a city mansion. I like to have a job all my own. There is marked difference between staying on a farm and living on one. What is my "main satisfaction?" why not ask me which child I like best?

In the letters from these 129 farmers only one considers the money profit to be the main satisfaction in farming and the writer of it now represents a farm organization; but he adds that it is not so much for the profit itself as for the comforts and conveniences the profit enables one to obtain. About a dozen correspondents find conditions now so hard that they are discouraged; some of them are badly in debt and the load is heavy to carry at present.

One Hundred and Twenty-Nine Farmers

Practically all writers recognize the satisfactions that inhere in the occupation in distinction from the amenities and accessories that may be purchased. My question was intended to uncover this aspect of the situation. The chief satisfactions, as revealed in the letters, are the independent way of life, healthfulness of the occupation, pleasure in productive labor, joy of the coöperative family living and the wholesome situation for the children, love of nature, close contact with living growing objects and the response of these objects to the touch of the good farmer, the satisfactions of landscapes, innate love of the land, consolation in the ownership of real property. Even at the risk of some repetition, I now print extracts from a few of these letters as a current contribution to the subject. Long ago I made a somewhat similar inquiry and published the summary results (The Training of Farmers, 1909), but the present letters are especially notable as reflecting a background sentiment in a more or less troubled epoch. These are real assets.

Let me say that some years ago my only boy decided to stay on the farm and help me. Now my joy comes from helping the boy.

The farmer is his own boss and paymaster, and his life can be as useful as any if not spent for selfish gain or aggrandizement.

I like the smell of new soil as it rolls like an endless ribbon from the moldboard. Out here we have

the enjoyment of irrigation. How the crops like water! I can just live in the fields in the irrigating season.

I grew up here on this farm. Like Walt Whitman's child, I went forth every day and the things I saw became part of me.

The main satisfaction is the abiding confidence that one is coöperating with the Creator in feeding and clothing the people.

Freedom from overhead domination, from the petty jealousies of public positions, and the feeling that one is earning his own bread rather than obtaining it at public expense, mean much to me.

A modern farm with reasonable improvements and facilities is a good place to live and especially to bring up children. Farming is an independent, interesting, healthful, hopeful life, in spite of, perhaps even partly because of, hard work and hard times.

My answer is this: the opportunity for improved farm methods and application of discoveries, the friendliness of the dog and the horses, the strong sturdy boys and girls, the opportunity for recreation and study. (A farmer out of an agricultural college thirty-five years.)

The chief satisfaction (joy) I get out of farming lies in overcoming the difficulties connected with operating a farm and disposing of the products to advantage. The raising of better cattle and crops than the average brings a sense of satisfaction difficult to duplicate. Further than this a close contact with coöperative buying and selling organizations which show enough progress to furnish the courage necessary to insure the continuance of this work is satisfying. We have long been looking for

an easy solution of our problems. I believe that if the solution had been easy it would have been found before now.

There is satisfaction in being at home with your family, working with your sons, cultivating the soil, watching the crops develop, handling the livestock. If farming was financially on a par with other business for equal brains and energy expended, everybody would be engaged in it.

Compelling motives are the independence of living out of doors, work with growing plants under the varying seasons and climatic conditions, and the inherent desire to dig in the soil.

My main satisfaction in farming is that I own my home, and the farm furnishes the means by which I can support myself and family independently of anyone else. I enjoy seeing the crops develop under cultivation and care, and also the study and care of farm animals.

Every day this week I have worked in the fields. The odor of the freshly turned furrow has again become part and parcel of my blood and sinew. It signifies that winter frost has done its work and that there is in the ground fertility for the new crop. Its urge challenges my best effort. He who does not know this springtime fragrance of the soil with its promises of fruition does not fully know the joy of farming. To plant seeds in well prepared soil and by careful culture develop useful plants; to make of the wobbly colt or calf or pig an animal better than its sire,—what could be greater?

Of course no one can continue to play a losing game and keep up enthusiasm; but in the thirty years I have been farming, few farms have proved

to be unprofitable. I have always been attracted by puzzles; I know of no occupation that offers so many problems of the most intricate kind as agriculture. Experimenting, studying and solving these problems have given me much pleasure. The independence of the farmer's life has been a satisfaction to me. I also find pleasure in watching things grow. I have always felt that the profession of farming is useful, and that I am using what the Creator has put in my hands as he would have me use it.

I keenly enjoy all the farming experiences, as the smell of freshly cured hay, the quiet contentment of cows at milking-time, the cackle of a heavy-laying flock of hens, the sight of well-managed orchards, the fields of vigorous growing crops.

Every year the farmer lives in hope of better things to come, which gives him a greater love for the smell of the plowed soil, the songs of the birds, the beauty of the flowers, woodlands, hills and streams; and thus urged on by Nature herself, if backed by a reasonably happy family life, nothing but foreclosure shakes him from it. I must confess I am one of the majority and that the "mirage" lures me on.

I was raised on a farm and always liked farm work. It is a pleasure for me to breed, feed and develop good live-stock. It is a pleasure to have a good growing crop of wheat, corn, oats, clover or alfalfa. You have heard of the song "Knee deep in Daisies"; well, what looks better than a bunch of good Duroc-Jersey shoats knee deep in clover? To me the farm is a manufacturing plant of the highest order. We have a variety of raw materials out of which we produce food for the country. We have more friction in our machinery than any other

manufacturer, such as the weather, too dry or too wet, all the pests of live-stock and grain. It is a pleasure for me to try to reduce this friction to the minimum, and with scientific help we can about master all but the weather. Then finally it is the best place to raise your babies. We have a boy four and a little girl two years of age, and they are waiting for me to finish this letter so they can go out with me to feed the pigs.

A happy comfortable farm home in my youth with no compulsion to stay there and my love of growing things and animals with opportunities for the best agricultural education of forty-five years ago are, I think, the reasons why I have kept close to the soil.

To work out the new problems and overcome the difficulties that the ever-changing conditions present to the farmer is a real satisfaction surpassed only by the joy of accomplishing the great transformation from the prairie wilderness to a real home through beautifying with shelter belt, hedge, lawn and flowers. (Alberta.)

I am nearly seventy-four years old and have been a farmer all my life. There is satisfaction in working with nature. When I go to the city and talk with business men and learn of their discouragements and of some of the laboring men's hardships, I come home better satisfied with my life.

I think farmers genuinely experience joy in their occupation. No matter how depressing have been the results of the preceding year, in the spring time (to modify an old quotation) hope springs eternal in the farmer's breast. The changing colors of the trees and fields and the ever-shifting clouds continuously afford me satisfaction, increasing as the years go by. A farmer who avoids city asso-

ciations which are more or less synonymous with high expenditure and display, may still lead a more or less joyous existence.

Freedom of action that once enjoyed could not suffer to be abridged. The spirit of creating, always hoping, always expecting, never on the dead level of monotony.

We find our biggest joy in owning this bit of earth, in working in the soil, the wind and rain in our faces, in the cool starry nights after the hot noon day, in growing our fine colts and pigs and lambs and calves, and especially in creating beauty in our flock of fowls; we love the wild flowers and birds; we take a healthy physical joy in the fine cream and eggs and vegetables we produce for our own use; we enjoy the community contacts and the local and State fairs and the folks down at our State College. We enjoy poverty on the farm much more than we would enjoy it in the city. (A farm wife.)

Love of the soil and the out-of-doors. It is in the blood. If I had my way I would have every boy and girl spend at least one full year on a real farm before the age of ten.

I am getting a lot of satisfaction out of farming. I presume the main reason is my love for the dairy cow. During the past few years she has consumed considerable amounts of rough feed and in turn delivered to me a finished product that had a market value.

The satisfaction of out-door work, and seeing things grow and develop, as the results of my own efforts, is just as great to me as I always anticipated it would be, when I was a city boy, looking forward to owning and operating a farm of my

own some time. Another factor which I had not thought so much about but which means more than anything else is the splendid partnership which this sort of life makes possible between a husband and wife. The average city man leaves home at seven-thirty in the morning and returns at six at night and his wife has had no chance to share in his joys or responsibilities. On the farm, the home life and business life are so closely interwoven that they cannot be separated. My wife is just as interested as I am in each undertaking that goes on, for she has helped make the decisions, and has seen the results of each year's efforts added to the others. It is unnecessary to dwell on the advantages of a farm for bringing up a family, for they are so obvious. Our three healthy happy specimens are proof enough of that.

Perhaps the greatest satisfaction I experience as a farmer is the absolute liberty of thought, speech and action which belongs to the man on the farm. Close companionship within the family, opportunities to appreciate the bright and beautiful in nature, "adventures in friendship" of the genuine sort, and a fair return for thought and energy expended in the farm business are additional factors contributing to the joy I experience in farming.

Personally, I feel that at no time within my recollection has the farming business displayed more optimistic anticipation than now. Likewise I am firmly convinced that agriculture has never before offered such opportunities to a young man. I know of no job, however attractive, which could entirely disassociate me from the farm. I farm primarily because I like it better than any other business in which I might have engaged.

While I acknowledge there are many sorrows and

disappointments in farming, yet I have kept at it for twenty-five years because there is no factory whistle to blow, no real labor trouble, and few troubles that there is not a joy in overcoming, such as weather, frost, snow, abortion and other things (I have never had T. B. in my cattle); and there is a great satisfaction in seeing live-stock grow and thrive and in producing better stock or farm products than do others.

Farming is the job of an honest man, a patient man, and there is satisfaction in trying to work out justice to all on basic principles.

While the profits in farming are not large, there is the satisfaction that one has independence, freedom of action and speech and always a comfortable living. One is never out of work.

To the person not too heavily burdened with debt, farming still offers the freest and most independent life. The isolation of the farm has passed, the physical drudgery is passing with the advent of machinery, while the old advantages of wholesome and independent living still remain.

Farming is more than a means of livelihood, a farm is much more than a manufactory for the production of raw material, a farm home is more than merely a domicile. If a farmer cannot count all his joy in securing financial return for his labor; if he does not delight in increasing soil fertility and producing perfect specimens of his various crops, if he does not derive pleasure in watching and making things grow, in making a ton litter of pigs, or in handling a high-grade calf, or making a particularly fine milk cow, he is in the wrong place by remaining on the farm. There is of course some satisfaction as also necessity in making farming profitable, but if the measuring rod of agricul-

ture is to be the size of the check, then to my mind this is placing farming on too low a level, and means that eventually American agriculture will be in two classes to a great degree,—the agricultural corporation and the peasant class.

The farm is a good place to work and a good place to get an appetite. After all, working and eating is the main thing in life. You do not get any fun unless you work and you do not have much fun unless you eat. A farmer ought to get lots of rest because he does not have any one to bother him. When he goes to the city there is always something going on. We do not worry much about the farmer.

I love to see plants and live-stock develop; watch a tree grow; and make a farmstead so beautiful that it will be the envy of passersby. The fresh air, grass, fruits, vegetables, and freedom make country life so worth while that I pity any one who must live in town. Last year I had twenty-nine kinds of vegetables in my garden and on October 1st there were fifteen kinds ready for use.

I am living on the farm purchased by my grandfather for my father. I have had some share in paying off the mortgage, erecting the buildings and planting sixty-five acres of fruit-trees. My main enjoyment is in the fruit part of the farm and the satisfaction of knowing that I have a foundation for a living that will continue. There is a certain independence on the farm, and time for thought. With my situation I cannot find words to express how much we love country life.

Yes, there is just as much joy in farming as ever but more grief in paying the bills. The main satisfaction is that one helps to clothe the poor and feed the hungry.

There is no profession like farming for those who make a study of it. If the farmer is unfortunate in being ill for a time, his dairy is bringing in a daily income; his crops are growing, as well also as when he sleeps at night.

The main joy or satisfaction to me in farming is the fact that the work is congenial, healthy and productive. The constant struggle to overcome unfavorable weather conditions, insect enemies and fungous diseases from the time of the blossoms to the harvest is a challenge to one's ability and resourcefulness. There is pleasure and satisfaction and generally a reward when you win out.

I enjoy living on the farm for the inspiration that comes from the growing things and for the fact that the country is the best place to raise a family. Eight months in school and four months in the manual training school of a farm with chores night and morning during school furnish the ideal place to make real men and women out of the children.

Yes, we experience joy in farming. The sense of coöperating with the vital forces that sprout the seed and bring the harvest gives a feeling of worthwhileness, interest and dignity that more than compensate for the sweat and toil and frequent financial discouragements. Then the beauty of hill and valley, of wood and meadow is as much a part of our everyday life as the air we breathe.

For one thing I was born to my "job." By family tradition it seemed almost unthinkable that I could do anything else. Then I think I am "farm minded" and that I find pleasure in growing things and in all the phenomena of nature and in the procession of the rolling years. Always there is the element of wondering as to just how things are going to turn out,—will this be a fat year for corn?

However, I think that for me the most satisfying fact of my business is that farming enjoys a continuity possessed by almost no other vocation. Finally we come to speak of things in terms of generations rather than years. It is true that to be a teacher is a wonderful privilege. The good teacher is immortal because he lives on in the life of his students. In the case of the professional man, I feel that very frequently his work dies with him; he cannot bequeath the things that he has made. But the farmer stands on the shoulders of those gone before. So I find myself saying, "Thus we did in grandfather's time," "In such wise my father did his work." Today I carry on as I may and in days to come I trust my son will take up my work where I lay it down. Always I thrill to Whittier's lines—

> We tread the paths their feet have worn,
> We sit beneath their orchard trees,
> We hear, like them, the hum of bees
> And rustle of the bladed corn.

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